Report on CSR in Bangladesh 2015

Transforming into a Value Driven Society

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September 2015
Disclaimer

The information contained in this document was correct at the time of going to press and reflects the understanding of the CSR Centre. Information about companies were secured through interviews and review of corporate websites. For more information about particular CSR initiatives please contact the company directly.

CSR Centre 2015
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1. Acknowledgements

It is with immense pleasure that the CSR Centre launches its “Report on CSR in Bangladesh 2015: Transforming into a Value Driven Society”. I would specifically like to thank those companies and organizations who have contributed to Bangladesh’s CSR landscape and have shared their CSR journey within the realm of this report.

Through the case stories and interviews on women’s empowerment, education, agriculture and access to energy it has been possible to highlight the positive contributions in each of these issues in the spirit of partnerships by the various stakeholders. We appreciate the interviews from Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP, the Speaker of the Parliament; Mr. Mikail Shiper, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment and Begum Yasmin Sultana, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Industries of the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh in playing a critical role in transforming the ways of engagement with private sector and development partners. I would like to thank the former Ambassador for Netherlands in Bangladesh Mr. Gerben de Jong on his insights into women empowerment and the private sector in Bangladesh. A special thanks to all our corporates, both national and international development partners and UNGC members for sharing their stories with us.

Lastly I would like to thank the CSR Centre Board of Trustees for its strategic guidance and support as well as the CSR Centre’s report drafting team who has worked relentlessly over the past few months to publish this report.

In the past few years “CSR “has been the driver towards changing the way businesses think and operate. Globally and in Bangladesh more and more corporates are practicing responsible business through various long term partnerships. State actors and businesses realize that working within a multi-stakeholder approach will transform towards a value driven society and assist in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Bangladesh.

Shahamin S. Zaman
CEO, CSR Centre
2. Foreword

In about a month from now, the United Nations General Assembly, at the Summit to be convened on 25-27 September, 2015, will hopefully adopt the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 17 Goals and 169 Targets. As is known, the SDGs envisage that the corporate sector and the business enterprises will play a critically important role in implementing the SDGs over the next fifteen years, between 2016 and 2030. The UN Global Compact Initiative embodies the role that is expected to be played by the corporate sector in this regard. The recently held Third International Conference on Finance for Development (FFD3), held on 13-16, July 2015, which adopted the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (A4), also looks at the private sector as a major source for mobilizing the needed resources to underwrite the SDGs. Indeed, in recent years, the role of the corporate sector and issues concerning corporate social responsibility (CSR) have gained high prominence in the context of the intense discourse and debate that preceded the finalization of the SDGs. One could argue that the changing perception about the role of business and the private sector in view of the SDGs does reflect a paradigm shift where business sector is being seen as part of the solution as the global community explores potential partners and partner ships that could contribute as means of implementation of the SDGs.

There is a growing recognition that CSR, if strategically deployed, could be a key means of implementation of the SDGs with the three pillars of sustainable development that the SDGs embody economic, social and environmental dimensions. In parallel, from the business perspective, there is a growing realization that CSR as a management tool could contribute to efficiency gains all along the entire spectrum of the value chain by ensuring compliance with international standards, practices and norms, safeguarding workers interests, creating decent jobs, enhancing productivity, raising competitiveness, and in the process taking care of profitability of enterprises as well. On the other hand, implementation of the SDGs is likely to create business opportunities for corporations and private enterprises as demand for sustainable energy rises, food security solutions are explored, affordable technology and communication tools are searched for and efforts are undertaken to make cities livable and planned urbanization possible. The enlightened self-interest of the business sector could serve as a powerful motivator for encouraging engagement and stimulating interest on the part of the private sector to be integral to the SDG implementation process.

Thus, a strong sense of shared responsibility must inform business strategies to be pursued by the private sector and the corporations in the era of the SDGs. Companies will need to align their activities to the needs of attaining the sustainability goals, targets and indicators and they will need to set their own targets and indicators to monitor progress and track success in this regard. Companies will need to ask themselves how they can tune their own targets in line with the SDGs, how their activities and practices will contribute to attain the SDGs goals and targets and which indicators they will deploy to monitor whether particular SDG relevant targets have been achieved. From the citizens’ side as well, there should be a sharper focus on initiatives that companies undertake, how sustainable their business models are and how business practices pursued by companies are impacting on SDG attainment. There will also be a need on the part of policy makers, through fiscal monetary and institutional mechanisms, to nurture, promote and support the efforts of the corporate sector to advance the cause of sustainable development. Private sector initiative sought to become integral to the national and global efforts by all the concerned stakeholders to meet the high aspirations related to the SDGs.

The SDG-era ought to be seen by the corporate sector as a time of both responsibility and opportunity, a time to contribute to attaining common global aspirations for sustainable development for all by deploying sustainable business models and by pursuing sustainable business practices.

Mustafizur Rahman
Executive Director
Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)
3. List of Abbreviation

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<td>BB</td>
<td>Bangladesh Bank</td>
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<td>CSR</td>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
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<td>CPD</td>
<td>Centre for Policy Dialogue</td>
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<td>FDP</td>
<td>Fertilizer Deep Placement</td>
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<td>GCN</td>
<td>Global Compact Network</td>
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<td>GHG</td>
<td>Greenhouse Gases</td>
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<td>GCLN</td>
<td>Global Compact Local Network</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
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<td>IFC</td>
<td>International Finance Corporation</td>
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<td>IFDC</td>
<td>International Fertilizer Development Centre</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information Communication Technology</td>
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<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>PPP</td>
<td>People/ Planet/ Profit</td>
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<td>RMG</td>
<td>Ready-Made Garments</td>
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<td>SME</td>
<td>Small &amp; Medium size Enterprise</td>
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<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>TBL</td>
<td>Triple Bottom Line</td>
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<td>UNGC</td>
<td>United Nations Global Compact</td>
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<td>UCEP</td>
<td>Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs</td>
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<td>WEPs</td>
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4. Executive Summary

The world is moving towards a value driven society – with technological innovations and better communication systems individuals, companies and organizations are much more aware and knowledgeable about what is happening in the global context. Issues such as human rights, women’s empowerment, access to quality education, conditions impacting farmers’ livelihood positions and access to energy efficient operations among others are some of the ongoing discussions for furthering the development goals. As the MDGs complete its time span in 2015 with its eight goals there has been critical discussions on embarking on a new global agenda – the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which specifically targets seventeen goals to achieve a better balance between the economic, social and environmental dimensions.

Businesses as well as national and international development partners are increasingly becoming engaged in creating “a sustainable – responsible future for all” in Bangladesh. As resources become scarce and Bangladesh experiences a growing population, CSR initiatives are molding ways in which communities and business work together towards creating an accountable and transparent mechanism to create an enabling environment for socio-economic growth. The Government of Bangladesh has a pivotal role in this process to achieve its vision of a “middle income country” within 2021 and has already implemented a number of programmes and processes towards achieving its goal.

This report seeks to share the “CSR good practices” through case studies, articles and interviews from companies, development partners and the government in order to recognize the changing scenario in Bangladesh for furthering national development agenda through implementing CSR.
Defining Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) could be defined as a company’s sense of responsibility towards the community and environment (both ecological and social) in which it operates. Companies can express this engagement, for example, through their waste and pollution reduction processes, by contributing to educational and social programs, etc. The CSR strategy of a company should demonstrate how the company is acting to be more responsible and make its business more sustainable.

World Business Council for Sustainable Development has defined CSR as "The continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development, while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large."

World Bank defines CSR as: "The commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community, and society at large to improve their quality of life, in ways that are both good for business and good for development".

CSR Centre defines CSR as, “Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can be defined as achieving organizational excellence in ways that honor ethical values and respect people, communities and the natural environment”.

“Creating a strong business and building a better world are not conflicting goals – they are both essential ingredients for long-term success.”

Executive Chairman, Ford Motor Company
Many definitions of CSR exist - as CSR is an evolving concept. However, an international common definition for CSR states that it is “a voluntary commitment by organizations to manage their operations and interactions with stakeholders in order to have a positive impact on the societies in which they operate”.

All the definitions of CSR describes the responsibility of companies on three pillars of sustainability:

- Economy (Economic Value) / “Profit”
- Social affairs (Human Capital) / “People”
- Environment (Natural Capital) / “Planet”

CSR relies on the Triple Bottom Line (TBL or 3BL, which implies People, Planet, Profit or “the three pillars”).

- People, the first dimension of the TBL, relates to fair and beneficial business practices towards employees as well as the communities which are impacted by the operations of the companies or organization. For instance, companies should adopt safeguards against unethical practices like use of child labour.

- Planet, TBL’s second dimension refers to sustainable environmental practices. A company endeavors to benefit the environment and not engage in any practice which damages the natural ecological balance. For instances the organization reduces its ecological footprint by carefully managing its consumption of energy and non-renewable resources.

- Profit, the third and final dimension of the TBL, represents the economic value created by the organization after deducting all input costs, including cost of invested capital.

This PPP triangle can be considered in companies or organizations to symbolize impacts on the economy, society and the environment. CSR management integrates social and environmental concerns into the corporate activities in such a way that the economic success can be combined with the benefit, for the society and the environment to create a “win-win” situation.
CSR in the Asian Context

The CSR Centre has conducted a research study on the “Existing CSR Policies/Guidelines in India, China, Indonesia and Pakistan”. The objective of this Research was to understand the scope and reach of CSR in Asian context. A comparative analysis through this study reveals that India, China and Indonesia have taken the lead in engaging and implementing CSR programs through Government and private sector led initiatives. But in India and Pakistan Government has developed and implemented a National CSR Guideline. The main existing forms of regulations, codes, market initiatives on CSR that exist in India, China, Indonesia and Pakistan are presented below:

India

• A “National Voluntary Guidelines on Social, Environmental and Economical Responsibilities of Business” was issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India in 2009.

• A set of “Guidelines on Corporate Social Responsibility for Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs)” was issued by the Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises in 2010.

• The new Companies Act, 2013 stipulates that all companies with a net worth of Rs 500 crore or more, or a turnover of Rs 1,000 crore or more, or a net profit of Rs 5 crore or more in any financial year will have to spend at least 2% of their net average profit of the last three years on activities that have been designated as CSR activities by the government.

• The government has identified 10 areas in which such expenditures will be eligible to be considered as CSR spending such as poverty, malnutrition, promoting preventive health care, etc.

Pakistan

• A “Companies (corporate social responsibility) General Order, 2009” was issued in 2009 by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan. This general order requires all public companies to provide descriptive as well as monetary disclosures of CSR activities undertaken during each financial year. Such disclosures are made in the directors’ report to shareholders, annexed to annual audited accounts.

• A “CSR Voluntary Guidelines, 2013” was issued by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan in 2013. The purpose of these guidelines is to streamline the framework of corporate social responsibility. The guidelines require that companies shall have a CSR policy in place which will be endorsed by the directors.
**China**

- The CSC9000T (China Social Compliance 9000 for Textile & Apparel Industry) is a Social Responsibility Management System based on China’s laws and regulations, international conventions and standards, and China’s particular situations. This system was developed by the Chinese industrial sector in 2005.

- China’s Circular Economy Promotion Law came into force in January 2009. The Law is formulated for the purpose of facilitating circular economy, raising resources utilization rate, protecting and improving environment and realizing sustained development.

- In 2010, the China International Contractors Association released the “Guide on Social Responsibility for Chinese International Contractors”. This Guide aims to establish the framework of social responsibility development for Chinese international contractors and to motivate Chinese enterprises to establish the concept of global responsibility and engage in international project contracting operations in a more responsible manner.

**Indonesia**

- In 1989, the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia released a policy for state-owned companies to support financially co-operative and SME in their business operation area.

- The Company Liability Act Number 40/2007 contains a very crucial and critical article particularly article 74 that regulates CSR as mandatory for natural resources-based companies.

- The regulation No.KEP-431/BL/2012, 2012 concerns Annual Reporting for Publicly Listed Companies – superseding the Capital Markets Supervisory Agency Regulation No. X.K.6., 2006. One of the basic improvements is that disclosures on corporate social responsibility should include policies, types of programs, and expenditure on; environmental performance, labor practices, social and community empowerment, and product responsibility.

- In 2012, the Government Regulation 47 implementing Social and Environmental Responsibility of Limited Liability Companies Act, specifically addresses the relevant issues of CSR, as generally applicable to Indonesian companies and provides certain issues related to CSR obligations, implementations and sanctions.
Mr. Mikail Shipar has been the Secretary of Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh since February, 2012. He joined the Bangladesh Civil Service, Administration cadre in 1983.

**An Interview with Mikail Shipar by the CSR Centre**

**What is the inspiration behind the initiative to formulate the "National CSR Policy for Children in Bangladesh"?**

“I would say that is not a matter of inspiration but a matter of responsibility. Legally, this Policy had to be formulated. The starting point was the Youth Convention held in Dhaka in October 2013 organized by Ministry of Labour and Employment and Save the Children. The aim of the convention was to discuss a special child-friendly National Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Policy. I strongly believed that through this Youth Convention there would be ample opportunity to formulate effective policies for youth development with Save the Children, other agencies of the Government of Bangladesh, the corporate sector and civil society. Today, we are proud of this “National CSR Policy for Children” we achieved to develop.”

**As this is going to be a policy in the near future, is there any chance to develop a law on this in Bangladesh by your Ministry? What will be your suggestions for the business communities to implement this policy in their workplace?**

“We are still in the final stage of the National CSR Policy for Children development so the next step will be the implementation of the action plan and later on there may be a possibility to develop a law if needed. To support this policy implementation, awareness, information and motivation should be brought in the business communities first. If we want the businesses to contribute to ensure the rights of the children, educational activities (such as seminars and trainings) are needed. It is also necessary to formulate CSR in a formal way. We have to be strategic if we want CSR to have an impact. This is a new concept so we have to consolidate CSR for effective results.”

**Do you think there should be any award for practicing the CSR?**

“Definitely but not only an awarding system is needed. I would recommend initiatives that should be taken by the Government in terms of tax treatment/incentives to further encourage CSR activities. Indeed, numerous countries provide tax incentives for CSR activities initiated by businesses such as China. Providing tax benefits allows CSR to be seen by companies as a benefit rather than a cost. Additionally, a recognition system should be part of the strategy to make the companies feel motivated and engaged about contributing towards CSR principles and actions. All these initiatives will provide an “enabling environment” for CSR.”

**Is there any initiative going on regarding the CSR and private sector engagement in the post Millennium Development Goals agenda of the country from the Ministry?**

“Following the adoption of the “National Child Labour Elimination Policy” in 2010, the Government issued a Statutory Regulatory Order identifying 38 occupations considered hazardous for children ages 14 to 18 and adopted the Children’s Act. This Policy provides a framework to eradicate all forms of child labour by 2015. The list of 38 categories of hazardous works includes butchery, chemical, handling goods in ports and ships and working as a driver’s aide for bus, truck or commuter vehicles (human haulers). The objective of the Ministry of Labour and Employment is to withdraw children from hazardous jobs; improve income generating opportunities for parents so they are not so reliant on child income; offer incentives for working children to attend school and enact laws and improve law enforcement to eliminate child labour. An innovative approach was to establish a “Child Labour Unit” as part of this policy, which will collect and disseminate data relating to child labour.”
About the Global Compact Local Network

Global Compact Local Networks (GCLNs) provide a platform for participating companies and non-business stakeholders to advance the UN Global Compact and its Principles at the local level. With approximately 101 established and emerging networks around the world, GCLNs serve an essential role in rooting the Global Compact within national contexts and advancing local priorities and needs. All companies are encouraged to participate in their Local Network, as well as engaging in countries where they have operations.

Global Compact Network Bangladesh (GCN)

The Global Compact Local Network (GCLN) was formally launched in Bangladesh in January 2009. It is a start that augurs well for the future given that the Global Compact is expected to receive more coverage in the country in the coming years. Since 2002, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) has been active in promoting the Principles in Bangladesh. In September 2007, CSR Centre came on board to take forward the GCN agenda in Bangladesh. At present, CSR Centre is the main promoter of the GCN and its Principles among the Bangladeshi signatories. CSR Centre has significantly contributed to increasing the promotion of these ideals in the fabric of the Bangladeshi business community. GCN contributes to achieve the objectives set in the Post Millennium Development Goals (SDGs) in Bangladesh through private sector led growth.

Currently, there are 55 Bangladeshi signatories to the Compact. By becoming a member of the Global Compact Local Network (GCLN) companies as the primary driver of globalization help ensure that markets, commerce, technology and finance advance in ways that benefit Bangladesh and contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive global economy. The private sector can bolster a positive image of the country and can put Bangladesh on the map by highlighting the private sector’s entrepreneurial progress in the last two decades.

Companies

SME

Public Sector

NGO Local

NGO Global

Foundation

Business Association Local

Academic

No. of Signatories: 55
How to Join
United Nations Global Compact

For Business Application:

Step 1  Review the Online Application Guidelines.

Step 2  Prepare a Letter of Commitment signed by the chief executive to the Secretary-General of the United Nations expressing commitment to (i) the UN Global Compact and its ten principles; (ii) take action in support of UN goals; and (iii) the annual submission of a Communication on Progress (COP).

Step 3  Complete the Online Application Form and upload a digital copy of the Letter of Commitment signed by the chief executive. The name of the chief executive who signed the Letter of Commitment must correspond with the entry in the online registration form.

For Non-Business Application:

Step 1  Determine your type of non-business organization (view the various categories of Non-Business participation).

Step 2  Review the Online Application Guidelines.

Step 3  Prepare a Letter of Commitment signed by the chief executive to the Secretary-General of the United Nations expressing commitment to (i) the UN Global Compact and its ten principles; (ii) take action in support of UN goals; and (iii) the annual submission of a Communication on Progress (COP).

Step 4  Complete the Online Application Form and upload a digital copy of the Letter of Commitment signed by the chief executive. The name of the chief executive who signed the Letter of Commitment must correspond with the entry in the online registration form.

Network Bangladesh
The Three P’s: Partnership, Principles and Private Sector

Im, Hong Jae
Vice President and Secretary-General, Global Compact Network Korea
Member and Deputy Chair of UNGC Local Networks Advisory Group

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to be officially launched at the United Nations Summit from 25-27 September, are a set of goals that address the most pressing global challenges including poverty, environment, gender equality, healthcare, education, and inequality within and among countries. The 17 SDGs and their 169 specified targets come into effect on 1 January 2016, and will guide the actions, policies and political objectives of UN member states and UN Global Compact participants until 2030.

They replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with a different approach; while the 8 MDGs, which were agreed on in 2000 and expire this year, are most relevant to social and humanitarian issues in developing countries, the SDGs focus on strategies for developed and developing countries alike, with a much broader scope. The SDGs also have larger focus on environmental, social and governance issues (ESG), which are the most crucial areas of concern in long-term development.

SDGs priorities may vary from country to country and from region to region. From the Asia perspectives, the major SDGs should be poverty eradication, climate change, and women’s empowerment. Poverty eradication is the most pressing global challenge; the post-2015 development agenda sets 2030 as the year by which all forms of poverty must be eliminated. To take urgent action and combat climate change’s impacts, environmental measures must be fully integrated into national policies, strategies and planning. To empower all women and girls and achieve gender equality, all forms of discrimination, violence and harmful practices must be stopped. As we embark on this collective journey, no one must be left behind.

SDGs implementation has much potential to make transformative change in Asia, which contributes 30% of the world’s GDP and is home to nearly one-half of the world’s population. Women make up more than one-half of the Asian population according to a UN Women report, and more than one-half of the world’s 1.2 billion poorest people reside in developing countries in South Asia. As Asian countries release the most carbon dioxide emissions, SDG targets concerning climate change will also certainly be heavily involved with Asian governments and regional organizations. Poverty eradication, women empowerment and climate change remain three of the most important issues in the Asian region, and SDG focus on solving them will have immense global impact.

Partnership is the key to successfully achieving the SDGs. From international partnerships to public-private partnerships with academia, the core element is collective action for synergy and coordination. For example, numerous efforts are being made in Korea to increase and utilize such partnerships. The Fair Play Club creates a public-private platform to combat corruption and create clean and fair market conditions through educational workshops and conferences; Development Alliance Korea involves the joint efforts among government, civil society organizations, corporations and academia to end poverty, eliminate inequalities and improve people’s quality of life, by initiating collaborative projects and exchanging information.
In order to form mutually beneficial partnerships in achieving SDGs, the UN Global Compact’s Ten Principles on human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption are essential in establishing a value-driven foundation. This places the private sector in a key leading position, with its abundant capital and technological resources, to engage with the SDGs and work with government and development partners for socio-economic and environmental progress. These principles integrate social responsibility into business plans, promote action benefitting people, planet and prosperity, and should be used in business approaches to SDGs implementation. Approximately 12,000 signatories support the values and principles of the UN Global Compact, which recognizes the business role and responsibility for achieving a better world.

Considering the critical role to be played by the UN Global Compact in achieving SDGs, the role of local networks cannot be overstated. All problems concerning SDGs are to be addressed in the local contexts, and cooperation among local networks is essential in this regard. Various practical and action-oriented suggestions from Asian local networks to productively mobilize regional SDG support include identifying SDG priorities for each country through a survey in order to set regional project based priorities, and allowing a corporation whose headquarters are in a different country to be a member of both local networks. From E-news bulletins to collaborative projects to establishing regional training and alliances, strengthening such partnerships will contribute greatly to SDGs implementation.

The next fifteen years mark a monumental time for the entire global community to solve deeply complex issues and work towards a more sustainable future. It is only through collaborative efforts, shared knowledge and corporate social responsibility that we can begin to address these problems. Now more than ever, we must search for principle-based solutions through partnerships and act on the need to include the private sector in sustainable development.

“In the next decade, the most successful companies will be those that integrate sustainability into their core businesses.”

– Jim Owens, Former CEO Caterpillar
An Interview with Begum Yasmin Sultana by the CSR Centre

Since the Ministry of Industries is planning to develop the Industrial Policy, in this policy how are you planning to incorporate CSR agenda for the industries?

“We are still developing the Industrial Policy and we have in mind to include the CSR agenda even if it is not mentioned directly, it is part of the vision we want to adopt. One of the main focuses related to CSR in this policy is to ensure the worker's interest, safety and employment security. Compared to the Industrial Policy 2010, we give emphasis on skills development, education, curricula and training. This is one example. Protection of the environment is also an important issue addressed by the policy. So there is no dedicated chapter to CSR in the policy but the CSR dimension is embedded in all the different chapters to a certain extent.”

How does the Ministry of Industries see CSR in Bangladesh from your perspective?

"CSR is very important and as you know I attended many workshops organized by CSR Centre. For the industry the 3 keys are money, machines and manpower – the three Ms. One of the key is labor and I want to give the example of ship breaking and recycling which is a critical issue but I can say that since we started working on this topic, in 2011 [with the introduction of The Ship Breaking and Ship Recycling Rules 2011], until today, there are improvements regarding working conditions. The Government of Bangladesh has recently introduced new national policies and legislation to improve the environmental and occupational health and safety standards in the ship breaking yards. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Government of Bangladesh will jointly implement a project entitled “Safe and Environmentally Sound Ship Recycling in Bangladesh – Phase I”. The principal funding for the project will come from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). With this project, the idea is to improve safety and environmental standards in the country's ship-recycling industry. So of course we emphasis on CSR."

How do you think the Government can play a role in enhancing CSR awareness and implementation? What benefits do you think a National CSR Guideline can provide the Private Sector and the Government?

“How can we implement CSR in the Private Sector? How can we improve good practices? First, we have to motivate them. A sort of propaganda is needed. There are so many guidelines and a lot of rules so I think a guideline alone is not enough. What is very important is to explain why CSR is needed, what the scope of CSR is and why we should be more responsible in the work place. It is also important to make a link with the global market and to outline that if the local companies want to enter the global market, CSR is a prerequisite. To raise awareness about CSR, a lot of workshops and dissemination of ideas have to be implemented. Then, it should be also necessary to give companies engaged in CSR rewards, incentives, and recognition. Also, because we follow what our neighboring countries such as India and Pakistan are doing, we should pick up good examples from their initiatives in the CSR field. We have to learn from the examples. Even in Singapore, they are very concerned by CSR, mainly the biggest companies. Indeed, they put a great emphasis on employee welfare. So we have to get inspiration from all of the good practices across the Asian countries. ”

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1. Ship breaking is the process of dismantling an obsolete vessel's structure for scrapping or disposal. Conducted on a dismantling yard, it involves a wide range of activities. It is a challenging process, due to the structural complexity of the ships and the environmental, safety and health issues involved.
6. INTEGRATING CSR

Women’s Empowerment

Women’s empowerment is a prerequisite for the sustainable development in a country. However in Bangladesh women represent 49.4% of the population (World Bank, 2014) yet still they are dominated by men and participation of women in the work place is very low compared to their male counterpart. Although several steps have been taken to reduce the gender inequality in different sectors- education, health, employment etc. but still there exists a huge inequality. Women’s empowerment and gender equality is closely linked to overall development goals of the country as gender inequality is one of the major barrier in achieving those goals.

Now-a-days a large number of women are engaged in global market workforce. In Bangladesh women’s participation in work has grown from 23.9% in 2000 to 31.5% in 2009-10 (Ministry of Finance Bangladesh, 2013). Women are engaged in a variety of economic activities ranging from home based work to outside paid work. In Bangladesh industries provides work to about 2.5 million women, which almost represent 75% of formal female wage employment in the country.

This section highlights through interviews issues related to women’s empowerment. An interview was conducted with the former Ambassador for Netherlands in Bangladesh Gerben de Jong on his insights into women empowerment and another interview with Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury the first ever woman Speaker of the Parliament of Bangladesh and her journey towards becoming a most successful woman in the country. It also gives some interesting case studies of companies showcasing their support to strengthen women’s livelihood around the country and an exclusive article about introducing Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) by Tulsi Byrne.
Since 2012, Ambassador Gerben de Jong is the Netherlands Representative in Bangladesh. Before his posting in Dhaka, he held the position of Ambassador to Vietnam and Senegal (and from there overseeing Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania and Sierra Leone). Earlier, from 2005 to 2009 Gerben de Jong was Director of the Environment and Water Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

An Interview with Gerben de Jong by the CSR Centre

Can you give us an overview of the Netherlands Embassy engagement in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Bangladesh?

“Efforts are being made to stimulate CSR awareness and behavior throughout the thematic areas of our programmes for development cooperation on Food Security, Water, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and Economic Affairs, with special attention to CSR activities in the garment (RMG) sector. The Embassy supports the major programme of the International Labour Organization (ILO) for improving labour conditions in the RMG sector together with the UK and Canada. We fund the promotion of cleaner water technologies in textile factories under the Partnership for Cleaner Textiles (PaCT) programme, being implemented by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), with 50% contribution from major brands and factories. With the Bangladeshi branch of the Dutch international non-governmental organization, SNV, we are developing a programme on promoting services on SRHR as part of the core business practice in RMG factories with the objective to improve working conditions for the female garment workers. Another example where CSR plays a key role is in the Embassy's project on rice fortification, which targets female garment workers and is partnering with large-scale garment factories via their CSR programmes to improve the nutritional quality of their food. Particular attention is paid to CSR during the Embassy's trade missions and all trade and investment promotion. To this end, the Embassy has had a programme for the last three years with Nyenrode Business University focusing specifically on promoting sustainable trade and investment.”

You are mentioning different projects targeting women; can you tell us more about the Embassy support towards women’s empowerment?

“Because there is much to be done to improve the position of women, we have gender as a cross cutting theme in all our projects in addition to our gender focused programme. For instance the Nirapod project works on increasing awareness of safe Menstrual Regulation (MR), Family planning (FP) services, and post MR care, and interventions are reaching 285,000 women and adolescent girls of which about 90,000 are women RMG workers. The Netherlands also supports the activities of the global HERproject implemented by Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) that links multi-national companies and their factories to local non-governmental organizations to create sustainable workplace programmes to increase women’s awareness on health issues. A number of other SRHR projects cover issues such as identifying interventions to increase the age of marriage for girls and raising awareness on women’s health and legal rights. Under the Food Security sector programs, the Rice Fortification
Program’s main target groups are women and children, while the Gender and Water Alliance Program in Bangladesh (GWAPB) is supported by the Embassy to enhance the role of women in larger water management projects."

**In your answers you provided an overview of projects targeting women where the private sector is involved; can you highlight programs where the role of the private sector is particularly relevant?**

“The major ILO program for improving working conditions in the RMG sector targets women indirectly as they make up 80% of the workforce of this sector. Almost 1,700 exporting factories are expected to be inspected for fire, electrical and structural safety under this program, thus improving working conditions in the RMG factories. The Better Work Program, another component of this program, expects to support 300 garment factories in achieving safe and healthy working environment to the workers. The Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education, EP NUFFIC, has developed a programme with BGMEA University of Fashion and Technology (BUFT), the official university of the Bangladesh Garments Manufactures and Employers Association (BGMEA) (this association has a membership of 3504 garment factory owners). Through this programme, the aim is to build the reputation and capacity of BUFT as the knowledge and resource center on CSR/SRHR for BGMEA and gradually for all of Bangladesh.”

**What is your opinion about how the private sector can play a role in the women empowerment area given your experience?**

“Globally, the private sector has been seen to play an instrumental role in the empowerment of women. While inequality between the genders have prevailed in both public and private sectors, the private sector can take important and creative initiatives to improve gender equality, to close the gender gap, and, support women in securing managerial positions given its flexibility and openness to novel approaches, which can lead to productivity increases. The private sector can therefore incorporate measures such as flexibility in working hours, accessible means of safe transport, affordable and quality child care facilities, appropriate gender segregated facilities and access to training and education as part of its business practice. Occupational safety and health is an important aspect of such measures and should be addressed appropriately. Safe and agreeable working conditions for women can be a win-win situation for employers and workers alike, given the potential for these interventions on productivity improvement while simultaneously improving the position of women in the corporate world. The Embassy’s projects aim at improving women’s economic empowerment, not just directly through its programmatic interventions, but also by making the issue of gender equity more prominent on the tripartite dialogue of the government, private sector and workers. Thus, cooperation is needed from all stakeholders, in public and private sectors, to be able to actually achieve the goal of women’s economic and social empowerment.”
Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP is the current, and first ever, woman Speaker of the Parliament of Bangladesh. Previously she served as the State Minister of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. Dr. Chaudhury has been a practicing lawyer for many years. Having been awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship, she gained her PhD in constitutional law in 2000 from the University of Essex, UK.

An Interview with Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP by the CSR Centre

You are the first ever woman Speaker of the Parliament of Bangladesh; how do you feel to hold such an important position and what was your career path?

“As you mentioned, this is a very important position and with that of course comes constitutional responsibility also but it is very challenging. As the first woman speaker, it sends out a very positive message throughout the country and also across the globe that women can perform in these very challenging professions and they can also handle and deal with these issues.

I think for any woman to climb her career ladder, being in the political arena or in the corporate sector, whatever is the position she wants to be in, I think one of the major issues is the education. Regarding my education, I studied Law at the faculty of Law in Dhaka University and later on I did my PhD in the University of Essex, UK. I have been a practicing lawyer in the Supreme Court for fifteen years before I took the position of the State Minister of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. So the first thing is that every girl and every boy must have access to education and the possibility to pursue to the highest level. I think that the majority of the difficulties and challenges can be overcome if you have that facility and if you do have that education. Secondly, you need a family support. Because if you don’t come from a family who supports you in pursuing your career, in pursuing your education, in choosing the position you want to be in, it will be hard to achieve your objective. I think this support is very important. Particularly for a woman because they often face the issue of the distinction between boys and girls, the situation where the brother gets better opportunities, etc. so it is better if the family provides an environment where girls don’t have to face this discrimination and these difficulties, and then, it will be much easier for them. I had the chance to have both the education and the family support and it is also thanks to these two components that I am here today.”

Regarding family support, education and the mentality of women and men, do you see improvements so far?

“Yes, we are going in the right direction because there is visible presence of many women in all the different sectors and in every sector it is demanding. Moreover, for women it has to be a double effort to prove yourself because you are a woman. So when I became the first woman speaker, one of the main challenges that I had to face was that if I can’t perform and if I failed then it will be a blame on all the women; everybody will say “there was a woman speaker and she couldn’t do it” nobody will ever say “there was a man speaker and he couldn’t do it” but for women it is a mental pressure that is always there. So I have that burden on me as the first one to prove that
women can do this as I don’t want to let down all of the other women. These are the challenges we always face and also the internal challenges; my family is very supportive, although for me the support was there, but what about the dilemmas that as a mother you face when your child has a high fever at home and you have a very important meeting which you can’t miss? Those are the dilemmas that really hurt you as a mother because you don’t want to leave your child but at the same time your profession needs you. Men don’t have this mental issue but every woman in her life faces this dilemma."

From where you were as the State Minister of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to where you are now; over this period, where do you see the most progress regarding women?

“Women empowerment in Bangladesh has made very significant strides. I was in Berlin just two days ago, attending a conference on reproductive health rights of women, organized by the German Government and the European Parliament. There a Swedish professor of global health, Hans Rosling, in his presentation mentioned Bangladesh quite a few times for its success in reducing maternal mortality, infant mortality, gender equality and education. Many speakers from different countries, during the conference, were citing Bangladesh as an example of success stories in these achievements. So Bangladesh has made very significant strides and it has been internationally recognized. As a State Minister for Women and Children Affairs, under the leadership of the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, we developed the National Women Development Policy (2011) and it was done in face of a lot of resentment, protests by the fundamentalist groups, it was not easy but we didn’t back up. So the National Women Development Policy, the National Children Policy we did and then the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2010 that were all the initiatives taken during this period. We wanted to create the framework to help the women attain their goals. I can also mention the focus of Social Safety Net protection that particularly targeted women to reduce the feminization of poverty. Another initiative is the income generating skill training program for women and also giving them some productive assets like if they are learning how to sew they will be given a sewing machine so that they can do something with their own skills. All these programs have helped the rural women, and we also helped women entrepreneurs to access the market to sell their products thanks to the government support to provide facilities. So the women empowerment is moving forward.”

During the launching ceremony of "Women Empowerment Principles in Bangladesh and Women in Need (WIN) Directory" in January 2015, you urged the corporate institutions to come forward in taking initiatives for women empowerment. Can you tell us more about what you think should be the role of corporate institutions?

“I think what the private sector can do is to analyze and see what are the policies the Government is trying to pursue, this is a first thing. Secondly, they can look at the global development agenda because we are coming to an end with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and we are making a shift to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that will define objectives for the next fifteen years so what are the goals there which help women? Because it’s a cross-cutting issue; if there is a goal to improve the water sanitation it will have an impact on women so women have a dimension there, if it is an energy access we are trying to promote, women have an entrance there because they are the ones who are collecting everything for the cook stoves and preparing the food. Everywhere there is a gender dimension. So the private sector can identify some of these very prime goals which affect women in a very fundamental way and then select which one they want to work on. They can find many issues such as maternal health where they can support. They can support in providing dormitories, they can come and join collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to have a public private partnership in building dormitories for the garment sector women, or providing buses for women to go from home to the factories, etc. So I think it is important that the private sector really tries to identify the issues and things where they can have an impact.”
According to the Bangladesh Millennium Development Goals’ last Progress Report, creation of decent wage employment for women is among the areas in need of greater attention. In your opinion, what are the steps that should be taken to face this issue?

“We always speak in favor of no wage discrimination, the wage should be the same for the same work but it was very interesting to hear someone tell me when I was advocating for this that sometimes the wage of the women are kept less to allow for more women to be engaged. This is a way to have more women employed keeping the wage down but I don’t know whether such a rational actually makes sense - we need to see if it really helps women to have more access to work but of course we are for equal wages. However, it is a global problem and it is interesting because during a World Bank conference in Washington last week where Christine Lagarde [Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)] was there and there was a question regarding the fact that women spent so much time in doing the domestic work, they are the care givers and everything but this work is never given the recognition or is never weighted. So Christine Lagarde said that yes, we are all for it but there is another aspect she pointed out that we don’t want to give priority and give household work the recognition of contributing to the GDP because then more women will be kept within the household chores sphere; they will not come out and join the different working places. So we have to think carefully what it means that household work should be given the economic recognition. There are so many different sights pros and cons; one really needs to think carefully before formulating any policy or jumping into any conclusion to have a total understanding of what it means to make these changes. However economic empowerment of women is fundamental, it is the most crucial thing because unless they stand on their own feet and are able to earn something for themselves, empowerment makes no sense.”

“Achieving gender equality requires the engagement of women and men, girls and boys. It is everyone’s responsibility.”

– Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General
Tulsi Byrne is the Coordinator for the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) team, a joint initiative between UN Global Compact and UN Women in UNGC Headquarter, New York.

In her role she encourages business to integrate gender equality and women’s empowerment into their core business operations and corporate sustainability efforts. Tulsi has a passion for economic development, with a specific focus on women’s economic empowerment.

2015 marks a decisive year for women’s empowerment as it is the 20th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – the 1995 comprehensive global framework for women’s empowerment. It is also the year in which UN Member States will decide on a new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that will steer the development agenda for the next 15 years. As the UN Member States negotiate and finalize the SDGs (due for release in September), voices from around the world have been advocating for a standalone goal on gender equality and calling for principles of inclusivity and equality to be mainstreamed throughout the SDGs.

In recent years, more attention has been paid to the critical role that the private sector can play to advance gender equality and sustainable development including through initiatives such as the UN Global Compact and the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs). As the engine for 90 percent of jobs in developing countries, the primary source of technological innovation, capital creation and investment, it is essential that business is a key partner in international discussions on women’s rights and economic empowerment as a complement not substitute for government’s own crucial role.

Research shows that investing in women and girls yields significant dividends for the workplace, marketplace and community, and yet, the full potential of women’s skills and talents continue to be untapped.

By not fully recognizing the benefits of women as leaders, consumers, entrepreneurs, workers and caretakers, societies across the world, are underutilizing their contributions to economic growth. Recognizing that gender equality is both the right thing to do and the smart thing to do, more than 950 business leaders around the world have signed a CEO Statement of Support for the WEPs and are taking concrete actions in the workplace, marketplace and community to advance gender equality.

The WEPs, a joint initiative of UN Global Compact and UN Women, seek to elaborate the gender dimension of corporate responsibility, the UN Global Compact and of businesses’ role in sustainable development. Stakeholders around the world are recognizing the value in promoting the WEPs to tackle gender equality and women’s economic empowerment.

showing the universality of the Principles. In January 2015, the Global Compact Network Bangladesh convened over 100 participants to launch the WEPs and discuss implementation at the country level.

In order to create the transformative change that will be needed to achieve the SDGs, the number of companies committed to the WEPs must grow significantly and greater action must be taken to implement the seven Principles. A call along these lines, together with a call to Governments to create the enabling environment for responsible business to play its role was captured in a 10-point Statement adopted by acclamation at the 2015 Women’s Empowerment Principles Event. The event, Unlimited Potential: Business Partners for Gender Equality, drew over 580 representatives from business, Government, UN and Civil Society and focused on the need for greater collaboration and partnership between all stakeholders, including business, to bring down barriers and create opportunities for women.

The United Nations Secretary General, delivering the keynote address at the event, stated “I hope that the Women’s Empowerment Principles annual event will serve as an entry point for business participation at the Commission on the Status of Women for years to come.”

The business case for gender equality is stronger than ever and it is evident that a multi-stakeholder approach, which proactively includes business, is essential to advance women’s economic empowerment. It is now time for all actors to move the needle by leveraging the WEPs to change the paradigm for private sector engagement and scale up action to create transformative change.
CASE-STUDY: HATHAY BUNANO

Cox’s Bazar is home to the longest sandy beach in the world and local tourism is quite healthy there, though we have yet to see international tourism reach Cox’s Bazar. Unfortunately this growth in economic activity is not reaching many of the people in this area and there is great need. To help prevent dependency on the forests and the use of natural resources, we joined forces under the CREL project to provide an alternative livelihood for women in this area.

It’s always very exciting to see women finishing the training course and be ready to move onto production work. During the training the women become very close and as well as learning the basic skills will learn how to make a number of different products. It is always nice to see how they help each other to learn.

The yarn used for training is the same quality as for production work but is different colours so that we can ensure very clearly which products are training products and which are production items.

Halima is 20 years old and has one little baby girl (shown in the picture). Before coming to Pebble she had no work and because she has a little baby was not able to find work anywhere. Her husband is a local trader and their family income is small and they have to also support their elderly parents. Halima hopes to be able to save money by making Pebble toys so that they can cope when life does not go to plan.

Nur Fatema is 18 years old and is not yet married. She is happy to be working making Pebble toys so that she can contribute to her family income. There are six members of her family and they are very poor. Nur Fatema knows that if she contributes to the family income then she will be able to delay her marriage. We see all too often, young girls are given away for marriage because the family can no longer support them financially and they have become
a burden. Most young women you speak to in Bangladesh do not want to get married at a young age but want to wait until they feel ready. By becoming financially independent, Nur Fatema is now able to have a say in decisions that are made about her life.

Ferdousy is 18 years old and is not yet married. She also wants to delay her marriage and continue to study. Her father is a driver and he cannot continue to support her and so Ferdousy is very happy to be able to make Pebble toys so that she can contribute to her family financially and continue to study. We see lots of young women who want to continue to study and who are very intelligent and determined, but so often, cannot afford to continue to study and must either leave the village to go to work in the garments industry or must accept a marriage proposal, in order to relieve the burden on their families. We are excited that Ferdousy will continue her studies while she is working part time making Pebble toys and we hope that she achieves her dream to one day become an accountant.

With this simple combination of cotton yarn and a crochet hook, Hathay Bunano and Pebble are able to bring real hope to the lives of these young women. We see similar stories over again, of women who want to earn enough money to send their children to school, of younger women who want to continue to study themselves, of women who want to delay their marriage but are aware of the financial burden they place on their families. We are excited that these 5 new centres in Cox’s Bazar are all now moving to production work and we hope all the dreams of these young women come true.

“A woman with a voice is, by definition, a strong woman.”

– Melinda Gates
Children and Education

In Bangladesh 30 million children still live under the poverty line. According to UNICEF statistics, there are 16.5 million primary-school-aged children (6 to 10 years old) in Bangladesh. Achieving their right to education is an enormous challenge. According to the Millennium Development Goals, Bangladesh Country Report 2013, significant progress has been made in increasing equitable access in education, reduction of dropouts, improvement in completion of the cycle, and implementation of a number of quality enhancement measures in primary education. However, progress is still needed and, in particular, improvement of quality of education is one of the challenges at the primary and higher levels that need to be taken care of on priority basis.

The government has the primary duty to protect and fulfill children’s rights, but the private sector has a great role to play as well. Companies interact with children on a daily basis as well as with family members of their employees and community members in the neighborhoods where they operate. Therefore the private sector can be an important stakeholder in helping children and young workers to get not only basic education but also the necessary skills for employment and prosperity.

This chapter features UCEP’s vocational and technical education with subsequent job placement to the urban working children and how some national companies offer support to the education of their employees and their children.
UCEP Bangladesh has been serving underprivileged children since 1972. From 2013 Zaki Hasan has been leading UCEP Bangladesh (Under-Privileged Children's Educational program) as the Executive Director. He has over seventeen years of experience in the development sector.

An Interview with Zaki Hasan by the CSR Centre

Can you introduce briefly UCEP?
“The Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP) is a leading national non-government organization of Bangladesh. UCEP was created in 1972. Initially UCEP worked with the concept of "community schools" to provide alternative schooling opportunity to the working children living in slums or on the streets of the cities. By now it has grown into an established NGO having 53 general schools and 10 Technical schools located in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Barisal and Rangpur Division and Gazipur District. Our existence for the last 43 years is about ending the curse of child labor with the power of education. We are now serving on an average 55,000 children yearly with the mantra 'help to learn skills to earn'."

What is UCEP approach and what makes it different?
“Child labour can be eliminated only when the two factors causing child labour are identified and removed: poverty and illiteracy. UCEP believes and has demonstrated with documented case histories that by providing awareness, education, skill training and employment support child labour can be eliminated in future generations. This is the philosophy that drives UCEP forward.

Our child & woman rights program aware children and community about education especially for girls. Then those who dropped out or missed out from Education for whatever reason may join our grade 1 to 8 general education program. Two unique features of this program are: 1) It has a shortened model of the national curriculum that takes half of the time (shortened school year) except for the grades (5 and 8) where our students can appear for the public examination; and 2) It integrates vocational education. The general education is followed by 6 months to 1 year technical education as well as secondary school certificate program on technical education. Once children complete technical education, we have employment services for children as well as credit and other support for self employment.”

Can you tell us more about the employment & support services?
“After imparting education and training to the disadvantaged children, UCEP supports the graduates to seek appropriate and long-term employment by exploiting their knowledge and skills in line with the demand of the labor market. This is the role of the employment & support services (ESS) Component. Through this component, UCEP provides adequate support services to the graduates passing out from its technical schools for apprenticeship/on the job training & appropriate employment. This is where the whole agenda of CSR comes in. UCEP has relations
Can you tell us more about your strong linkages with the industry?

“The employment service is possible because of the strong linkage that UCEP maintains with industries and other stakeholders. A systematic approach is followed by UCEP to establish and develop linkages with industries and involve their representatives in the process of designing and updating the courses, establishing training facilities and ensuring the quality of skills training being imparted. UCEP is contributing successfully in producing skilled workforce to meet demand of skilled manpower of local industries. We bring together the needs of the underprivileged children and the needs of the industries.

When businesses profit from the skills and knowledge of the students we train, they increase their productivity. However, UCEP is heavily dependent on the support of donors and would need more support from the private sector benefiting from its activities.”

Can you give us an example of partnership with the private sector with an important CSR dimension?

“Among several partnerships with CSR dimension, one of the most recent and exciting one is a partnership with RSA Capital. UCEP is going to commence 4-years diploma course in its proposed polytechnic institute namely UCEP Institute of Science and Technology (UIST) under the Bangladesh Technical Education Board. The idea is to offer quality higher level of skills to meet the increasing demand in the job market. The other objective is to have a sustainable model of service that would firstly earn for itself through a fee-based program and then secondly utilize savings from its earning to provide free of cost skills training for underprivileged children and youth in UCEP training centers. Now to establish the polytechnic institute instead of seeking donation, UCEP has partnered with RSA Capital. This unique private banking firm will mobilize ‘investors’ for UIST from a few selected banks and corporates that have strong relationship RSA Capital. The reason we are calling this “investment” rather than CSR or donation is because the funds will be used for improving human capital of the country and as a whole these ‘investors’ will benefit, although not through direct financial return. These funds would be used in establishing the polytechnic along with the coverage of the risks involved in the early years of such institute. UIST would utilize this fund to fast forward its break-even point and then start saving from its earning to invest in the skills training for the underprivileged children and youth’s skills training. The contributors in return would get a balance sheet showing how much socio economic changes have happened to the beneficiaries. The unique part is that it’s an investment that must ensure return and asset accumulation for sustaining this social enterprise.

Therefore the first ever donation of an amount of 10 Lakh taka is made by RSA Capital to start the establishment of UIST. This institute will offer four years diploma courses. The admission announcement will be made soon.”
EPYLLION GROUP initiated a scholarship program for the meritorious children of the employees in 2012. The title of this educational assistance program, “KHEA”, came from Bangle origin. KHEA means the boat which facilitates people to cross the river. KHEA elaborately stands for “Keen Hand for Educational Assistance”. This program covers all employees with giving exclusive consideration for the workers. KHEA is mainly for the meritorious students of Epyllion Group’s employees (all workers and staffs) at educational levels of PSC, JSC, SSC and HSC. Each deserving students entitled for the scholarship receives the scholarship up to the completion of graduation subject to get competitive academic result. Then, there is an opportunity for the meritorious students to be hired by EPYLLION GROUP.

KHEA was launched in 2012 by providing scholarship to 47 meritorious students from the mentioned four educational levels. In 2013, total 98 students received KHEA scholarship in 2013 and 2014 for her outstanding results.
KHEA scholarship for their academic result. In 2014, Epyllion Group provided scholarship to 116 students. And this year, 140 students are facilitated with KHEA. In total 461 students of EPYLLION family received this scholarship from EPYLLION Foundation. Twenty of these students are the company’s employees who are continuing their study simultaneously with their service at EPYLLION GROUP.

The objective of EPYLLION GROUP through this project is to help its workers and their children to access education and in particular girl’s education. Indeed, gender is also a criterion in the selection of the meritorious children. Positive impacts of the program include a higher worker’s satisfaction and therefore an increase in the well-being and productivity of workers at Epyllion.

“Education is the most powerful weapon, which you can use to change the world.”
– Nelson Mandela
CASE-STUDY: UNIQLO

Child-Friendly Schools

UNIQLO, as a child clothing manufacturer and retailer, wishes every child has a dream for the future and every child knows the pleasure to learn. Therefore, in October 2012, UNIQLO announced the launch of “Clothes for Smiles”, a programme that has selected UNICEF as a beneficiary, committing US$ 5 million over 5 years to education programmes in three Asian countries including Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has made significant progress in expanding access to primary education, but the main challenges are quality and equity. Although the government has also recently approved a National Education Policy for the reform of the Education sector and the Third Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP 3) to improve the quality of pre-primary and primary sub-sectors, there are still widespread geographical disparities in performance that exist across the country.

This project will address inequalities by providing equitable access to quality education to children in this disadvantaged/marginalized area using a “Child-Friendly Schools” approach that focuses on improving access, quality, and equity in education.

“Child-friendly Schools” are schools with safe drinking water and separate washrooms for boys and girls, in which all children can actively participate in classes taught by trained educators. Such schools treat all children equally without discrimination, while providing basic educational resources, including teaching materials, stationery and furnishings.
The project will be implemented in Palashbari Upazila in Gaibandha District which is among the lowest performing districts in social indicators. The project aims, for 5 years from 2013, to establish Child Friendly School environments in more than 190 schools and provide equitable access to quality education to more than 75,000 schools children.
8. INTEGRATING CSR

Farmers’ Livelihoods & Sustainable Agriculture

Agriculture is still the backbone of Bangladesh’s economy contributing 16.3% of the nation’s GDP and 44% of the total workforce (Finance Ministry, FY2013/14). Although the conditions of the farmers are gradually improving over the past decade with the programmes and initiatives of relevant stakeholders in this sector there still remains much to be done so that the farmers do not lose their livelihood options. Many farmers depending on their geographical locations are switching to multi-cropping systems to enhance their income.

Several government initiatives are underway in investments in the agricultural sector. This section features how KATALYST has developed a project that aims to contribute to increasing the income of farmers in the rural areas and facilitating changes in services, inputs and product markets, which in turn increase the competitiveness of farmers and small enterprises. An interview with Ishrat Jahan from IFDC Bangladesh gives an idea about IFDC’s focus on best farm management practices, the creation and transfer of crop nutrient management and agribusiness expertise. A case study from Banglalink shows how they helped rural farmers by creating a Farmer’s Help Line.
In addition, AAPI supports capacity building, policy reform, and micro-enterprise development that are crucial to fertilizer deep placement (FDP) technology to improve crop yields and economic returns to farmers. Balanced fertilizer and better water management practices. Emphasis is on improving farmer access to and use of balanced fertilizer and better water management practices. Emphasis is on improving farmer access to and use of balanced fertilizer and better water management practices.

“The AAPI project, funded by USAID, is designed to strengthen and re-orient agricultural production systems in Bangladesh under the Eurasia Division. She is an economist also responsible for conducting economic and policy assessment of fertilizer sector, preparing project proposals for IFDC on fertilizer trade, policies, agribusiness, environment and technology dissemination. She is the Project Coordinator and Chief of Party of the Accelerating Agriculture Productivity Improvement (AAPI) project funded by USAID.

An Interview with Ishrat Jahan by the CSR Centre

Can you give us an overview of the IFDC activities in Bangladesh?

“IFDC is a nonprofit public international organization (PIO), governed by an international board of directors, established in 1974 as part of global effort to increase agricultural and economic growth. IFDC is combining state-of-the-art research and development to address global agriculture issues that impact: Poverty, Hunger and Environment. At present, IFDC is focusing on best farm management practices, the creation and transfer of crop nutrient management and agribusiness expertise.

In Bangladesh, IFDC began its effort in 1978 with two major research/policy projects focusing on constraints and opportunities in the country’s fertilizer sector. The reforms designed by IFDC through mid-1994 under these projects were comprehensive, complementary, and focused on private sector-led fertilizer market development and the creation of the Bangladesh Fertilizer Association (BFA). For over 36 years, the organization has worked closely with the government and private sector partners to build the fertilizer market, introduce quality agro-inputs, develop and transfer innovative agro-technologies, assist agro-entrepreneurs with needed market information and access to credit to foster private agri-business in Bangladesh and build sustainable market practices. Today, IFDC also focuses on soil nutrient management and resource conservation and continues to emphasize the development of sustainable agricultural production systems for long-term food security, with a focus on increased crop yields and greater economic returns to Bangladeshi farmers.”

Can you tell us more about the Accelerating Agriculture Productivity Improvement (AAPI) Project?

“The AAPI project, funded by USAID, is designed to strengthen and re-orient agricultural production systems in Bangladesh. The project goal is to improve food security and accelerate income growth in rural areas by increasing agricultural productivity on a sustainable basis. The project promotes efficiency of agricultural inputs through an integrated best farm management approach. It promotes use of good quality seed, judicious application of balanced fertilizer and better water management practices. Emphasis is on improving farmer access to and use of fertilizer deep placement (FDP) technology to improve crop yields and economic returns to farmers.

In addition, AAPI supports capacity building, policy reform, and micro-enterprise development that are crucial to sustainability of agriculture production systems. An estimated 3.5 million farmers including 800,000 direct...
beneficiaries are expected to benefit from AAPI and 1,200 private entrepreneur supply points established to afford farmers access to FDP products. The estimated savings to the Government of Bangladesh due to improved nutrient use efficiency is US$84 million.”

**What are the positive environmental impacts of this project?**

“AAPI is promoting, among others, one climate smart technology –the FDP technology that improves nitrogen use efficiency in farmers’ fields. FDP reduces nitrogen volatilization and emissions of harmful greenhouse gases, as well as groundwater and waterway contamination. Because FDP doubles nitrogen utilization, the natural gas required to produce urea is decreased by 50 percent, also reducing greenhouse gases. Indeed many farmers do not know that only 30-40 percent of the applied nitrogen fertilizer is taken up by plants, and the rest is lost to the environment when urea is applied through traditional method of surface broadcasting (spreading, usually by hand) across rice field. This creates negative environmental impacts such as water and air pollution and emission of greenhouse gases (GHG). This necessitates the efficient management of fertilizer, deep placing of fertilizer briquettes below the soil surface, which intensifies agricultural productivity and reduces negative environmental consequences. Additionally, tests up to this point show FDP use reduces GHG emissions from nitrogen fertilizer when compared with conventional surface application of fertilizers. AAPI is also promoting water use efficiency through Alternate Wetting and Drying (AWD) technology.”

**How is the private sector involved in this project?**

“The AAPI project incorporates market-oriented concepts in addressing both supply and demand factors as related to FDP technology diffusion. On the demand side, in addition to public sector extension department, IFDC has involved the NGOs and the rural entrepreneurs who own a fertilizer briquetting machine to establish their own promotional campaigns within their business plan. This includes sponsoring farmer training and establishing field demonstrations for their product. They are encouraged to advertise around these activities. On the supply side, the project seeks to establish a private-sector network of suppliers for FDP products. This is the key to affording farmers convenient access. Because of the risk involved in introducing a new FDP technology, the project incorporates an incentive (as a subsidy) to encourage private dealer investment.

To promote FDP coverage on a wider scale, AAPI initiated collaboration with BFA, the largest association of the 38 members of Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI), whose members are now participating in AAPI activities. AAPI is focusing on developing a retailer’s network in addition to fertilizer briquette producers to increase the sales outlet and ensuring easy access to farmers of the FDP products. At the field level, AAPI is working with different seed companies to use FDP technology for quality seed production. A national-level workshop was also organized to motivate different seed companies and some of them, now, produce seed using FDP technology. Another example where IFDC links with the private sector, is IFDC and ACI Agribusiness Ltd agreement to work together to improve farmer access to a combination of quality seed and FDP inputs in AAPI locations. IFDC is also working with the largest plastic industry, the RFL, to commercially sell FDP applicators.

A last contribution from the private sector I can mention is the Walmart Foundation component in the AAPI program; the goal is to train 40,000 small-scale women farmers on the cultivation of vegetables using FDP technology over a two-year period. This is part of the global Women’s Economic Empowerment Initiative of Walmart Foundation focusing on reaching nearly 1 million women globally by 2016.”
Katalyst started in 2003 and now we are in the final phase of the project. The first phase lasted 5 years from 2003 and 2008 and basically the idea was to test few innovative ideas, for example rely on micro systems to solve the problems small farmers face such as how to access quality inputs. Indeed, Katalyst follows the Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P) approach, which works indirectly, focusing on achieving systemic change in order to provide new opportunities for poor people. The approach aims at changing the behavior of market players, such as private companies and associations (public and private), to engage poor farmers into their businesses as suppliers, distributors, retailers and/or employees. During the second phase of the project - from 2008 to 2013 – the idea was to scale up the innovative ideas that worked and during the third phase started in 2014, we want to consolidate our previous agricultural sector work, deepening and widening the projects pro-poor impact, and capitalizing the project’s knowledge and experience.

Can you give us an example of ongoing interventions you learnt from and you applied in ongoing or future activities you develop with your partners?

“I can mention the case of the maize contract farming system promoted by Katalyst. We started this project in 2008/2009 when we identified three main constraints for the maize farmers: a lack of information services, limited access to finance and a lack of access to appropriate quality inputs, support services and forward market. In 2011, Katalyst signed a memorandum of understanding with National Credit and Commerce (NCC) Bank and Agrani Bank to introduce dedicated credit lines for maize farmers. In the pilot phase, farmers have been able to access credit through their local branch, with support from contractors. So, because Katalyst facilitated banks to develop appropriate loan schemes, these created sustainable access to finance and therefore more farmers were able to enter maize production through the contract farming scheme. Moreover, Katalyst created linkage between private companies and local processing companies such as feed mills and crashers who are working together to make sure that maize farmers using their inputs have an end market to sell their products to. Katalyst will leverage its experience of working in the Greater Rangpur, Greater Bogra, Greater Rajshahi and Greater Jessore to partner with six leading seed companies to promote maize cultivation in new geographic areas and in summer (kharif) season.
Can you tell us more about another partnership with national companies? To which extent they are involved?

“In the fish culture sector, we worked with hatcheries and aqua-chemical companies to help small fish farmers to increase their incomes by diversifying into more profitable species and practices. Among the constraints for the farmers, we identified: a limited supply of quality feeds available and a limited capacity to adopt modern cultivation methods. To face these challenges, Katalyst implemented two strategies: first, the project worked directly with feed companies to boost their volume and quality of production and secondly, the project worked with a number of major national-level feed and aqua chemical companies to demonstrate how the application of feed and aqua chemicals, along with the use of improved cultivation techniques can improve production in commercial fish farming. The idea was also to link established aqua chemical companies with hatcheries for the overall quality improvement of fish farming.

Another example is the project with Banglalink started in 2009. The aim was to launch a helpline for farmers to give them solutions regarding disease prevention for their crops, poultry and fisheries for example. Katalyst has been closely involved with Banglalink in generating innovative ideas, designing and structuring the processes for the service so that it adds value to the farmers and rural SMEs.”

Can you give some examples of positive environmental impacts of your projects? Can you say that some companies you partner with help to disseminate sustainable agricultural practices?

“To disseminate environmental-friendly practices, for example, we worked on safe and judicious use of pesticides. The idea was to encourage farmers to select the right type of pesticide and to use it appropriately, with the correct dosage. Katalyst worked with the Bangladesh Crop Protection Association (BCPA) to train farmers, retailers and pesticide sprayers across Bangladesh in the safe and judicious use of pesticide. Almost 135,000 farmers are now benefiting from using pesticide safely and judiciously.

Another initiative is the “Integrated Pest Management” (IPM). Katalyst has been working with the private biopesticide companies and public research organizations such as Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI), in order to promote IPM as the future of crop protection in Bangladesh. As part of this initiative, Katalyst also worked with Ispahani Biotech, a leading integrated pest management company, to facilitate them for cluster demonstrations across Bangladesh on the use of pheromone traps for effective pest control. Three hundred and forty small and marginal vegetable farmers were selected as demonstration farmers and received training in cluster groups. Approximately 16,000 farmers benefited in one year.”
Changing Lives for a Better Future

Before SQUARE Herbal and Nutraceuticals Ltd (SHNL), a division of SQUARE pharmaceuticals Ltd, the leading pharmaceutical company in Bangladesh, initiated the project, “SHAMRIDDHI,” the rural areas of the northern part of the country were severely affected by Monga. (a phenomenon of poverty and hunger marked by infertility of lands and unavailability of employment.)

In 2005, SHNL together with HELVETAS Swiss (working for forestation) began the journey with 43 impoverished women by providing them Adhatoda vasica plant (Bashak), some financial aid and the training to conduct the medicinal plant cultivation program. Now the program expanded into formal training of 300 Local Service Providers (LSP) who in turn reach out to the target groups- village women, marginal farmers and unemployed youths. As of 2014, “SHAMRIDDHI” works in 16 districts of Rajshahi and Rangpur Division and Shunamgonj District of Sylhet Division. There has been a tremendous business impact from the traceable medicinal plant that amounts to 1.48 million US Dollars (2014) from 0.36 million US Dollars (2007).

Economical impact

- About 60,000 families of marginal farmer (Female: 48,000 & Male: 12,000) are earning through medicinal plant cultivation in the northern part of Bangladesh.
- Poverty has been alleviated as they are earning from Tk. 5000 to Tk. 25000 per month.
- Women are contributing to the economy as their participation in the earning process is maximum.
Social impact
- The medicinal plant cultivation and marketing model enhances social integrity through arranging interaction among the farmers.
- The education provided by LSP and the collection centre based social contacts enhances social value.
- Collective effort in medicinal plant cultivation, harvesting and processing.
- Social gathering and dependency through LSP based self training program.
- Initiation of saving money through developing cooperative societies.

Environmental impact
- Huge cultivation of medicinal plant in the abundant land has enhanced forest development (450 km road side)
- Use of natural pesticides and organic fertilizer enhance the caring for the environment.
- Roadside Bashak cultivation decreased soil erosion

“The discovery of agriculture was the first big step toward a civilized life.”

– Arthur Keith
CASE STUDY: BANGLALINK DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS LTD.

Rural Farmers’ Access to ICT in Bangladesh: Creation of a Farmers’ Help Line

Banglalink has always supported the agricultural sector with utmost passion in order to make it digitized by introducing different mobile based ICT services and in this regard has come up with innovative services like Banglalink Krishi Jigyasha, Banglalink Krishi Bazar, Banglalink-Channel I Krishi News etc. Since its inception, Banglalink has been continuously working on bringing pioneering services for facilitating the people affiliated with the agro sector. As a part of this effort, Banglalink has signed a MoU with the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) under the ministry of agriculture on the 24th December, 2014 in order to launch “Farmers’ Help Line” for the SMEs and rural people called “Jigyasha” means Queries 7676, a one of its own kind service in Bangladesh.

The objective of this step is to bring the agricultural sector of Bangladesh in the realm of revolutionary technological benefit under the concept of e-Agriculture. This joint initiative of DAE and Banglalink will enable all the farmers of Bangladesh with the opportunity to get connected with the field level extension officer (Sub Assistant Agriculture Officer) of their respective blocks just by dialing one single code and this initiative will ease the field level extension officers in serving the farmers of their respective territories with their agriculture related queries.

Key achievements:
- 1.1 million calls within the first eight months
- 74% of the callers are very satisfied with the service provided through 7676
- 49% of the callers said they will absolutely call again for solution to their problems
9. INTEGRATING CSR

Access to Energy

Bangladesh with its growing population has been struggling to meet the ever increasing demand for electricity. The rural area is home to over 70.6% (World Bank 2013) of the country’s total population. It is estimated that around 59.6% of the total population of the country have access to national grid connectivity of which 90% is used for consumption in urban areas with only 42% access in rural areas. Only 6% of the country’s population has access to natural gas which is concentrated in urban locations. Bangladesh aspires to be a middle-income country by 2021 and according to the World Bank, to sustain its accelerated and inclusive growth; Bangladesh will need to tackle energy and infrastructure deficits among many fronts where substantial efforts will be required.

According to the Millennium Development Goals, Bangladesh Country Report 2013, a major concerted effort by the government, donors and civil society organizations is essential to implement rapidly sustainable energy programmes and technologies that have positive environmental impact and development benefits. The vision of the Government is to ensure “Access to Electricity for All” by 2021. Companies with expertise in the energy sector can support the Government’s objective in the energy security area as IDCOL (Infrastructure Development Company Limited) is doing with the Solar Home System (SHS) program started in 2003 to ensure access to clean electricity for the rural areas. Therefore the private sector can be an important stakeholder in addressing Bangladesh’s energy needs.

This section showcases the German Agency for International Cooperation, GIZ, is promoting renewable energy and increasing energy efficiency and how some national companies offer a “green” access to energy.
Dilder Ahmed Taufiq works in the area of promotion of Renewable Energy (RE) & Energy Efficiency (EE) in Bangladesh. He is also working on innovative financing mechanism, capacity development and optimal capacity utilization, methodological and institutional development in communities.

An Interview with Dilder Ahmed Taufiq by the CSR Centre

Can you introduce GIZ and the priority areas you work on in Bangladesh?

“The GIZ is an international cooperation enterprise for sustainable development with worldwide operations working on behalf of the German Government. Its corporate objective is to improve people’s living conditions on a sustainable basis. Bangladesh is a priority partner country for Germany in the context of its international cooperation. GIZ has focused on the following priority areas in Bangladesh since 2014: renewable energies and energy efficiency, good governance, rule of law and human rights and adaptation to climate change in urban areas. In particular, GIZ is working with political, civil society and private sector stakeholders to develop strategies to promote compliance with social and environmental standards in garment factories and achieve sustainable improvements in working conditions for garment industry workers.”

Can you tell us more about The Sustainable Energy for Development (SED) program and who are your partners?

“GIZ started to promote the use of renewable energies in 2004, then, to follow the first technical cooperation project ran from 2004 to 2006, the Sustainable Energy for Development (SED) Program was set up in 2007 to basically address two components: promoting renewable energy and increasing energy efficiency. The Bangladesh government partner of the joint program is SREDA, the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources (MoPEMR). The aim is to promote the efficient use of renewable energy through solar energy systems, biogas digesters, and improved cooking stoves and rice parboiling systems – which supply urgently needed energy to the rural areas and generate employment, thus reducing poverty in a very immediate and tangible manner. The program is expected to assure that poor, and in particular women, are actually the primary beneficiaries by orienting its activities to this target group.”

You mentioned “solar energy systems” as a way to develop renewable energy; can you tell us more about this technology and its benefits?

“One of the objectives of the SED Program is to disseminate the solar technology to Bangladeshi villages. The idea is to provide access to electricity for people in remote and rural areas, who are not usually connected to the national grid, replacing kerosene lamps (which provide poor illumination and produce emissions that cause respiratory problems) and battery-supported electricity supply. Solar Home Systems are small photovoltaic systems that transform solar energy into electricity, providing a decentralized power supply to individual users. The dissemination of Solar Home Systems started in 2003 with the government-owned Infrastructure Development Company Ltd. (IDCOL) and with financial support from GIZ, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank
among others. Although the solar panel cost per watt peak has declined in recent years, the price of a solar home system still remains out of reach for millions of rural Bangladeshis. Therefore, the SED Program spearheaded a number of new approaches for reaching the very poor with solar power. With SED support, private-sector partner organizations employed new light-emitting diode (LED) technology to design smaller solar home systems less costly than the original ones. This approach was a success and these Small Solar Home Systems (SSHS) are now included in the distribution scheme through IDCOL.

You mentioned also the “rice parboiling systems” as a way to develop renewable energy; can you tell us more about this green solution for rice mills?

“Another industry which makes widespread and inefficient use of biomass consists of over 50,000 small and medium-sized steam-generating boilers that parboil 90% of the Bangladesh rice harvest right at the mills. In this context, in conjunction with the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, the Energy Audit Cell of the Ministry of Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources, and Modern Erection Ltd., GIZ developed an Improved Rice Parboiling System (IRPS) having almost double efficiency compared to that of traditional systems used in most of the small and medium-sized rice mills. In addition, it is more safe and very much environment friendly (less emission) and yet of affordable cost. Although the new system is clearly more expensive than the previous system, the savings in fuel enable a payback period for the new system within 2 years (depending on intensity of usage). Demand for this new rice parboiling system is high. The SED Program, in conjunction with the rice mill owners’ associations in various mill clusters is replicating this innovative parboiling system all over the country.”

Besides the local rice mill industry, which businesses were involved?

“For the dissemination of the Improved Rice Parboiling System, finding the initial investment required was a big challenge. The SED Program has therefore been advising banks (such as Bangladesh Bank) and financial institutions about the benefits of the new technology and encouraging them to provide loans to rice mill owners. If the 50,000 traditional parboiling systems used across Bangladesh can be successfully replaced with the new systems, hundreds of deaths and injuries and thousands of health problems will be prevented and the country will also save at least two million tons of rice husk a year. For an energy-starved country such as Bangladesh that relies on biomass for 50% of its total energy supply, a highly significant increase in energy and biomass resources can make a big change.”
Solarising Bangladesh, Solar Pumps for a Better Access to Energy

Agriculture is a critical sector of Bangladesh’s economy. Contributing 45% of total labor force and 12% of export value, agriculture is one of the major driving forces behind economic growth in Bangladesh. Irrigation, that needs power comprises 42% of the farmers cultivation cost. Power for irrigation is being provided in two means, electricity through public grid which is highly subsidized and the cheapest from of power, the other means are diesel or any other fossil fuel which is very expensive.

According to the survey reports of BADC, 85.3% of the pumps running in the field are diesel powered and consuming over 1100 Million liters of diesel per year.

Rahimafrooz Renewable Energy Ltd (RRE) has been working with solar pumps since 2004. In this project, developed in the villages of Mamuderpara, Chengmari, Mithapukur, Rampur, RRE developed a tri-party commercial business model involving commercial bank-NGO-Farmers, with major focus on the farmer’s and the NGO’s secured pay back. This first commercial solar irrigation system was launched in July 2010, by the honorable Governor of the Bangladesh Bank.

Project Impact
- Cost optimization
  Life time cost for solar pump is much more less than diesel pump.
- Green solution providing better environment
  Solar pumps use clean, state of art zero emission solar PV technology.
- Community income enhancement
  The project is providing an additional yearly income of BDT 20,000 per farmer.
- Socio-economic impact
  Community children have started schooling and also the women have started small cottage business with the enhanced family income of the 29 beneficiary farmers.
The solar panels provide 11.84KWp of electricity. The panels utilize 8-9 hours of daily sunshine they receive with sun tracker to provide uninterrupted water supply. The sun-switch enables maximum utilization of the sunlight the panels receive. This multi-crop farming is significantly improving the farmers’ livelihoods by ensuring economic benefits.

- Protecting and Conserving Water and Waste Management System
  Solar submersible pumping technology is a slow pumping process that helps conserving underground water level.

- Optimizing Maintenance Practices
  Solar irrigation system allows almost no maintenance and service requirements.

started schooling and also the women have started small cottage business with the enhanced family income of the 29 beneficiary farmers.

“I’d put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don’t have to wait until oil and coal run out before we tackle that.”

– Thomas Edison
Citi—GHEL Solar Project for Rural Microenterprises in Bangladesh

The Citi—GHEL Solar Project for Rural Microenterprises was introduced in 2011 in selected villages around the country to give these communities access to electricity. The program was initiated by Association for Underprivileged People (AUP), financed by Citi Foundation and executed by GHEL. The objectives of the project were kept in line with the key focus areas of Citi Foundation – the development of micro entrepreneurs and microenterprises.

The two main objectives are:

- Direct support to microfinance clients by offering Solar Home Systems by which their families would have increased access to electricity.
- Enterprise development support to micro entrepreneurs by providing them training to enable the acquisition of new skills — making their businesses more productive and raising the income level of the entrepreneur.

Project impact
Result of Citi Foundation’s contribution
- Reduced total cost of the product due to a 10% subsidy.
- No down payment for the end user.
- No interest expenses.
- The client was enabled to make repayments solely from the cost savings on fuel expense.

Environmental impact
- Decreased the dependency on fossil fuel.
- Contributed to the reduction of green-house gases.
Together with the Solar Home System (SHS), GHEL provided women from remote areas with free training on the installation, functions and maintenance. This approach allowed for further female empowerment—both economic and social—through additional income generating activities.

The initiative targeted mainly micro entrepreneurs and their households in the villages of Motlab and Sengarchar in Chajpur District. These villages did not have access to the national electricity grid which severely restricted the people and the local entrepreneurs in their daily activities and business development efforts. Households in selected villages were provided with 20W SHS and micro enterprises with 40W SHS in order for them to be able to extend their business hours.

**Economic impact**
- Low cost and reliable energy solutions.
- Employment opportunities among the low-income community (especially women).

**Social impact**
- Improvement of living standards, access to information and levels of education in the targeted villages.
- Reduced risks of health problem and fire hazards.

“We need to bring sustainable energy to every corner of the globe with technologies like solar energy mini-grids, solar powered lights, and wind turbines.”

– Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General
“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you’ll do things differently”

– Benjamin Franklin
AT A GLANCE
Message from the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, CSR Centre

I am happy to see that CSR in the last few years is playing a pivotal role in shaping business behavior in Bangladesh. Globally many companies are engaging to become members of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) as businesses look towards commitment, sustainability and responsibility towards its stakeholders – be it shareholders, employees or communities.

The CSR Centre through its relentless efforts is the first and foremost formal entity in the country to initiate awareness not only on the various dimensions of CSR but also the importance of sustainability reporting (GRI) and introduced the ways in which the UNGC Principles have been implemented through effective partnerships within the corporate sector. The Centre adds value to the overall development process of the nation by disseminating information of “good CSR practices” as well as the various approaches to CSR that are ongoing in Bangladesh. It is through this Report that we actually learn about the positive stories of change, about strong collaboration between private sector and development partners both national and international as well as how the Government of Bangladesh is facilitating an enabling environment for a better society.

I would like to congratulate the CSR Centre in publishing the “Report on CSR in Bangladesh 2015: Transforming into a Value Driven Society” which is beneficial for all stakeholders.

I do hope through this initiative there will be much more opportunities for CSR engagements in the future.

Faroq Sobhan
Chairman, Board of Trustees, CSR Centre & GCN Bangladesh Representative
Message from the CEO

The CSR Centre has come a long way in its journey in the evolution of the CSR discourse in Bangladesh.

Every day we see new companies trying to understand how to get a “cutting edge” in business by identifying its unique brand image to gain market access. We see both international and national development organizations trying to engage in partnerships with the private sector for societal development. The cross-cutting mechanism here is CSR. In recent years there has been measurable impact both quantitative and qualitative of how CSR can contribute towards sustainable profits and investment for business through the global reporting mechanism of GRI (Global Reporting Initiative). Whereas globally and in Bangladesh international development partners are signing up with relevant brands specifically in the RMG sector to implement CSR in line with social, environmental and economic aspects in order to build ethical supply chains. Global businesses emphasize on ethical sourcing of products and services. Sourcing countries are being compelled to look into developing global standards - human rights, occupational health and safety, fair remunerations, environment, labour standards, etc which are in the purview of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) Principles.

I do hope that this report entitled “Report on CSR: 2015 – “Transforming into a Value Driven Society” meets its objective of disseminating the struggles as well as the successes that companies and development partners endured to create a positive CSR environment in Bangladesh. CSR implies linking all stakeholders and nurturing an environment where both businesses and communities can work together in a transparent manner towards an inclusive model for socio-economic transformation which is value driven and enhances overall development.

This report is subdivided into ten sections which highlight the definitions of CSR and gives an overview of the CSR status in some of the leading CSR countries in Asia and how some of the GOB Ministries feel about CSR. It talks about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) and the GC Bangladesh Network activities. The report focuses on four main areas of integrating CSR – women’s empowerment, children and education, sustainable agriculture as well as the energy sector. Lastly we have given a glimpse of the CSR Centre and its activities in 2014/15.

In today’s world of globalization, depleting resources and growing population we need to have a holistic approach to efficiently and effectively work together in transforming towards a sustainable world.

Shahamin S. Zaman
CEO, CSR Centre
& GCN Bangladesh Focal Point
“The business of business should not be about money. It should be about responsibility. It should be about public good, not private greed”

– Anita Roddick, Founder, Body Shop
“Surely we have the wit & will to develop economically without despoiling the very environment we depend upon.”

— Tony Blair
About the CSR Centre

CSR Centre is an independent, non-profit Trust established on September 5, 2007 with private sector start-up funding to encourage and expand CSR practices in Bangladesh. Among the various definitions of CSR used around the world, CSR Centre believes that CSR is a set of business practices based on ethical norms and transparency that contributes to the sustainable development of both internal and external stakeholders in the best interest of the business, society and the environment. The Centre provides CSR services and consultancy as well as advisory services. The primary objective of the Centre is to become the prime source of information, resources and advisory services on CSR in Bangladesh, and the operational principle is to contribute to achieving the human development targets set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Bangladesh through private sector led growth.

CSR Centre is the Focal Point for the Global Compact Network (GCN) in Bangladesh and is the main promoter of GCN in Bangladesh. CSR Centre is also the founder member of SANSAR (South Asian Network on Sustainability and Responsibility), which is a regional network working collaboratively for long term development of economy at national levels.
Mission
To be recognized as the centre of expertise for CSR in Bangladesh by sharing knowledge and providing expertise and services to promote sustainable development through responsible business practices.

Vision
To be the source of CSR resources for companies seeking to engage in CSR activities or further define their current activities into a concise framework. These activities are also key strategies for corporate excellence in order to maximize stakeholders benefit.

Key Activities and Services
- Advice companies on CSR strategy development, partnerships and project management-the Centre assists companies through in-depth consultation to develop a concise roadmap for sustainable contributions.
- Participate in forums to engage stakeholders to advocate responsible business- the Centre engages in various seminars and workshops.
- Promote UNGC membership and provide advisory services to members.
- Provide training and facilitate workshops on topics of CSR to motivate private sector.
Board of Trustees of the CSR Centre
## CSR Centre’s Activities in 2014-15

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<td>Aga Khan Foundation Bangladesh &amp; Phulki.</td>
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<td>Private Sector Engagement Strategy.</td>
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<td>Developing the National CSR Guideline for Bangladesh</td>
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### Workshops, Seminars & Training Programmes:

- Workshop on CSR & Women Empowerment.
- Training on Sustainability Reporting – as per GRI G4 Guideline.
- Training on Economic Empowerment & Employment Generation through CSR.
- Hosted the Sixth United Nations Global Compact Local Network Exchange Programme.
- Hosted the Global Compact Local Networks Regional Meeting Asia/Oceania 2014.
- Launched Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) & Women In Need (WIN) Directory.
“Saving our planet, lifting people out of poverty, advancing economic growth... these are one and the same fight. We must connect the dots between climate change, water scarcity, energy shortages, global health, food security and women's empowerment. Solutions to one problem must be solutions for all.”

– Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General
The Ten Principles of the
United Nations Global Compact

HUMAN RIGHTS

Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
Principle 2: Make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

LABOUR

Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
Principle 4: The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
Principle 5: The effective abolition of child labour; and
Principle 6: The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

ENVIRONMENT

Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
Principle 8: Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
Principle 9: Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

ANTI-CORRUPTION

Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

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