



European Union



BANGLADESH
Europe 2012

FOREWORD



The European Union is widely recognized in Bangladesh for its support to democracy and human rights, its open single market - accounting for more than half the country's exports - and reliable development cooperation, amounting to around €500 million in grants each year.

However the full extent of our cooperation - the areas we work in, the sectors we support, and how the EU institutions complement bilateral assistance by the Member States - is less well known.

This book on 'Bangladesh and Europe 2012' is a first attempt to show the full extent of cooperation between the EU and Bangladesh. It is published as Bangladesh celebrates 40 years of its independence. Bangladesh has come a long way since the 1970s and so has the European Union. The book highlights how we work together today, not only bilaterally but also in facing global challenges such as climate change, which call for new forms of alliance.

I hope that readers of this book will gain a better understanding of a relationship that encourages stability and respect for human rights, creates jobs and new opportunities, support skills development and livelihoods of the poorest, while also focusing on sustainable development - in short, cooperation that counts.

William Hanna
European Union Ambassador
Dhaka

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OVERVIEW

Bangladesh's Achievements, Opportunities & Challenges

The last two decades have seen major changes within Bangladesh, and in its relations with the rest of the world. Whilst the country still faces challenges, there can be little doubt that Bangladesh has seen impressive economic, social and political development since the restoration of democratic civilian rule in the 1990s. The 2008 general election received international recognition as being both fair and free.

Whilst having a predominantly Muslim population, Bangladesh is a secular state. There is freedom of religious worship, and women are represented at the highest political levels. The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition are both women.

Independent institutions, such as the National Human Rights Commission and the Information Commission, are increasingly contributing to the growth of an effective system of checks and balances upon which any democracy depends and thrives, and the EU keenly supports their progress towards becoming fully effective and independent institutions.

Partnership and cooperation between the EU and the Bangladesh on climate change

As a low-lying and highly-populated country, Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to climate change. The effects are increasingly being felt in Bangladesh; be it increased salination in coastal areas, unpredictable weather patterns or riverbank erosion. By 2050, 70 million people could be affected annually by floods, and eight million by drought, and as much as 8% of Bangladeshi territory could be lost to inundation if sea levels rise by the projected 43cm. One third of the country's territory could be lost if sea levels rise by a metre. By adopting in 2009 a Strategy and Action Plan for Climate Change, Bangladesh has taken important steps towards preparing itself for action.

As one of Bangladesh's main development partners, the EU is committed to helping Bangladesh to cope with the many challenges

ahead in this area. Support to environment and climate-change adaptation for the poorest people is already a vital part of the EU's assistance to Bangladesh. Having a detailed strategy in place has given

Bangladesh good access to the global financing which is being made available. To that end, the EU – with the UK, Denmark and Sweden – is supporting the Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund, managed by the World Bank, to support the implementation of Bangladesh's climate change strategy.

The EU and Bangladesh also stand shoulder-to-shoulder as allies in the international campaign to prevent climate change. Both agree on the key principles of an agreement to tackle climate change. The agreement must be global, and such an agreement must radically cut back on global emissions of greenhouse gases, especially those of developed countries. Both partners also consider that substantial global financing is needed to enable developing countries around the world to adapt to climate change and to control their emissions.

Bangladesh has made major improvements in disaster preparedness and management. However, many people are still at great risk from natural disasters, some of which are exacerbated by climate change. These include drought, flood, salination, cyclones and earthquakes. Deforestation is also a problem in parts of the country.

Bangladesh's large population is increasingly developing urban, rather than rural, characteristics (27% of the population in 2008, with a 3.5% annual rate of increase in the urban population between 2005-10): it is one of the world's most densely-populated countries.

The country's economic performance over the past two decades has been dynamic. The economy has moved from dependence on foreign aid and agriculture to increasing reliance on exports of clothing as well as remittances from Bangladeshi workers abroad. There is some concern about the extent of

the economy's exposure to international markets, since its exports are currently dominated by ready-made garments. However, there are now signs of diversification into new export sectors such as shipbuilding and information and communications technology.

The percentage of those living below the poverty line has dropped from 56.6% in 1992 to 31.5% in 2010, while literacy has risen from 35% in 1991 to 56% in 2009. However, malnutrition is common among people living in poverty, and seasonal famines occur regularly in parts of the country. Whilst the wealth of the country has increased, inequality in income distribution within the country has also risen over the last 20 years (see box). Some of this can be explained by technological change, as is the case in most other countries, but Bangladesh's increasing urbanisation is also a factor, since inequalities tend to be greater in urban than in rural areas.

Income Distribution

The Gini Coefficient measures the extent to which the distribution of income between individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A score of 0% implies perfect equality while a score of 100% implies perfect inequality.

For Bangladesh, it was 26% in 1992, 31% in 2005 and 32% in 2010 (World Bank), thus showing increased inequality. Whilst this compares favourably with other countries (including many EU countries), the trend is of some concern in terms of social stability.

Years:	1992	2005	2010
% of total income earned by richest 20% of the population:	36%	41%	41%
% of total income earned by the poorest 20% of the population:	10%	9%	9%

The UN's Human Development Index (HDI) provides a composite measure of three basic dimensions of human development: health, education and

income. Bangladesh's HDI ranks 146th out of 187 countries in the world. A particular problem for people in remote areas of Bangladesh and in the urban slums is their poor access to public services such as education and health.

Investment in Bangladesh's infrastructure has been insufficient to keep pace with the growth in demand which stems from industrialisation, urbanisation and population growth. This has led to chronic energy shortages and to overcrowded transport infrastructure, which are now two of the main constraints on economic growth.

What is the European Union doing in Bangladesh?

Trade with Europe is one way of the major ways in which the EU helps Bangladesh. Most of the country's exports now go to the EU, which is the largest single market in the world. Trading with the EU contributes substantially to Bangladesh's economy, and many of the foreign investments in Bangladesh come from the EU. Therefore millions of people's jobs in Bangladesh, and many Bangladeshi companies, depend on the country's trading and investment links with the EU.

The EU is a strong supporter of the strengthening of democracy and human rights in Bangladesh, both politically and as a development partner. Its support for the 2008 general election is discussed in the Values section of Part Two of this book.

The EU is also the world's biggest provider of grant assistance to Bangladesh, disbursing around €500 million in grants each year collectively through the EU's institutions, as well as through Member States' bilateral programmes.

What is the European Union?

The EU is a Union which has brought 27 countries together to successfully pool economic and political resources in their common interest. The EU is neither a federal state nor an international organisation in the traditional sense, but somewhere between the two. The Member States remain independent sovereign nations, but by pooling their resources gain much greater collective strength.

With more than 500 million people in its 27 Member States (member countries), the EU is the 3rd largest population bloc in the world after China and India, and has a single labour market, enabling citizens of the Member States to travel and move freely between Member States.

The EU is the world's biggest trader, accounting for 17 % of global exports and imports in 2010. It also has the world's biggest single market for goods

and services, representing over 20% of the world's purchasing power. As a single market and customs union, without barriers between Member States, the EU has a common policy to govern its trade with non-EU countries. The EU's trade arrangement for the Least-Developed Countries, including Bangladesh, is known as the 'Everything But Arms' arrangement, which gives duty- and quota-free access for all goods (except arms) originating from Bangladesh to the EU market.

The EU, collectively and through the Member States' bilateral programmes, currently provides over 56% of all official development assistance worldwide, overwhelmingly given as grant support (which, unlike the loans of some other development partners, does not need to be repaid).



(Member states, above, in yellow; Candidates for membership in blue)

PEOPLE

There are strong and close ties between Bangladesh and the EU. Not only have there been rich historical ties extending over centuries, but there has been heavy migration from Bangladesh into the EU since independence. Migrants not only retain much of the culture of Bangladesh, but they also absorb the culture of their new homelands.

Europe opens its educational institutions to Bangladeshis every year, and provides grant funding for vocational and tertiary level study. Many thousands of Bangladeshi alumni from EU Universities maintain links with classmates in Europe after completion of their studies, for example through Facebook contacts. Similarly, as inward investment from the EU to Bangladesh increases, personal links are created.

With this large span of mutual interests, relations between Bangladesh and the EU are being strengthened through business and personal contacts.

Migration & Remittances

Bangladesh and the European Union have long-standing links between their peoples.

In 2010, approximately 391,000 Bangladeshi migrants left for overseas employment. There are some 7 million Bangladeshis living abroad, many of them in Europe.

Money remitted to Bangladesh from overseas migrant workers has a major impact on Bangladesh's economy and on its society. In addition to their positive macroeconomic impact, remittances go directly to migrants' families and communities for their improvement. From 2002 to 2008, remittances to Bangladesh grew from 5.7% of GDP to 11% of GDP at a time when GDP was growing rapidly.

Registered Bangladeshi migrants in Europe

UK	500,000
Italy	70,000
Greece	11,000
Spain	7,000
Germany	5,000

The UK-funded Tuberculosis Detection Programme (UKTBDP) in 2005 established a medical team which gradually developed into a well structured Migration Health Division for the International Organization for Migration (IOM). It provides assistance to migrants travelling to the United Kingdom, Italy, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States permanently, and to those travelling to other beneficiary countries, such as Ireland and Norway, as required. It focuses on the health needs of migrants and on medical conditions which are of public health/public safety concern. The IOM migration health network in Bangladesh has centres in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet, and mobile medical teams also cover specific health requirements in remote areas close to refugee camps in the South East of Bangladesh.

For historical reasons, the UK has been the destination of most Bangladeshi migration to Europe. About half a million Bangladeshis and British citizens of Bangladeshi origin today live in the UK, including some whose ancestors migrated to the UK more than a century ago. There are close links between the members of those communities and Bangladesh, through social and family linkages as well as through business and investment interests. The Bangladeshi community in Britain also contributes significantly to the British economy. For example, restaurants owned and run by people of Bangladeshi origin employ about 90,000 workers in the UK, with an annual turnover of around €4.2 billion. The Bangladeshi community in Britain sends significant remittances to Bangladesh (see box).

Remittances from the UK

During 2010-11, Bangladesh received overall remittances of US\$11.65 billion from around the world. The contribution of remittances from the UK is significant, at approximately 8% of the total worldwide remittances received; since 1998, about US\$6 billion has been sent as remittances from the UK to Bangladesh.



At the 2010 General Election, Rushanara Ali was the first person of Bangladeshi origin to have been elected as a member of the UK parliament. Baroness Uddin was the first Bangladeshi and Muslim woman to enter the UK House of Lords.

According to the Italian Bureau of Statistics (ISTAT), some 70,000 Bangladeshis reside in Italy (it could even be double that number, according to some estimates). This is symptomatic of the new globalisation of migration processes, in which migrant communities establish themselves with extraordinary rapidity, from only a few hundred Bangladeshis in Rome in 1990.

Cultural exchanges

Cultural exchanges between Bangladesh and Europe are driven by activities which jointly enrich social and personal development, and such ties between Europe and Bangladesh are gaining momentum.

Six EU Member States (Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands, Spain and the UK) undertake regular cultural activities within Bangladesh.

Baishakhi Mela Festival in London

Brick Lane, the heart of Bangladeshi community in London, is famous for its jalfrezi, onion bhajis and poppadoms, and has been given the title of "Curry Capital 2012". Brick Lane is also known as Banglatown. There is an annual Brick Lane Festival, a Banglatown International Curry Festival, and the Baishakhi Mela, for the Bangla New Year on 14 April, is celebrated at Trafalgar Square and in the East End of London each year. It is the largest Asian open-air event in Europe, and the largest Bengali festival outside Bangladesh

The Bangla media in the UK includes 4 TV channels and over 12 daily newspapers. They create and maintain awareness amongst second and third generation Euro-Bangladeshis about Bangladesh and its culture.



Spain in Bangladesh

There are 5 Spanish language teachers at Dhaka University's Institute of Modern Languages, and new classroom equipment is being provided by a Spanish company. The Embassy is organising a range of cultural events, such as film festivals, exhibitions on design, urban planning, architecture and the performing arts, such as the recent Flamenco concert in February 2012.



France in Bangladesh

The French Embassy and the Dhaka and Chittagong Alliances Françaises promote extensive cultural links and experiences, with French language courses in Dhanmondi, Gulshan, Uttara and Chittagong for over 6,000 students per year. Alliance Française Dhaka offers a number of artistic workshops and promotes French and local culture (especially painters and musicians), has regular film screenings and exhibitions, including a bi-yearly Theatre Festival. Examples of events organised by the Alliances Françaises in Bangladesh include a hip hop workshop and show in collaboration with Goethe Institut, and a seminar on the Arab Spring in collaboration with Institut Français in Paris. In addition, the Embassy provides scholarships for students, civil servants and others, as well as funding for cultural activities in Bangladesh, such as an Archaeological mission outside Dhaka and a Francophone Festival.



The Netherlands in Bangladesh

Cultural programmes are promoted by the Embassy of the Netherlands on special occasions, such as the 40th Anniversary of diplomatic relations and the Queen's Day, and the Embassy links with other cultural activities, such as World Press Photography exhibitions, cricket events, whilst ensuring Bangladesh is represented, for instance, at the International Documentary Film Festival in Amsterdam.



Germany in Bangladesh

The Goethe-Institut in Dhaka (Dhanmondi) runs German language courses and examinations, as well as collaboration with schools and universities. Furthermore, it encourages international cultural exchange and fosters knowledge about Germany by providing information on its culture, society and politics through cultural events, workshops, seminars and its library. The German Embassy in Dhaka is involved in academic exchanges, scholarships for sports and lectures on political and social topics. It will celebrate 40 years of diplomatic relations with a classical concert in May 2012.



Italy in Bangladesh

The Embassy provides cultural events at least once per month, including regular movie screenings, exhibitions and other forms of cultural exchange, in cooperation with organisations such as Dhaka University and the Bengal Foundation.

In February 2011 a major exhibition of more than 80 Bangladeshi artists was organised in the Residence of the Italian Ambassador, and opened by the Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes. This three-day event and sale raised approximately 50% of the total costs for the participation of Bangladesh in the prestigious 'Venice Biennale' of Visual Arts.



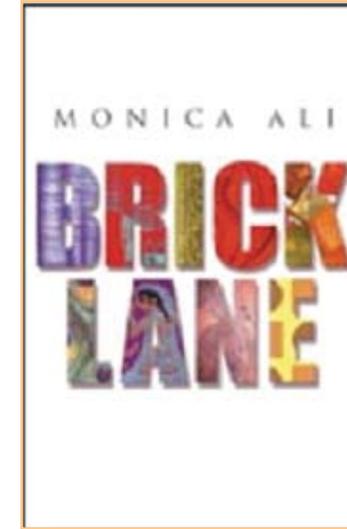
Photo Courtesy of Promotesh Das Pulak, entitled "Echoed moment in time", 2011

As a result, and for the first time in its history, Bangladesh participated in the 'Venice Biennale' in 2011, with a national pavilion located in the Gervasuti Foundation. The pavilion hosted the works of five young Bangladeshi artists under the theme "Parables: five Bangladeshi artists interpret contemporary cultural difference".



The United Kingdom in Bangladesh

The British Council is the primary organisation for cultural exchanges between Britain and Bangladesh, including promoting the English language through teaching and examinations, school twinning with British schools, university cooperation, teacher training, leadership programmes, youth volunteerism, scholarships and joint research programmes. There are film shows held throughout Bangladesh, and support for Bangladesh's creative industries. At BRAC University, a Bangladesh Youth Parliament received support, plus a fashion programme, a Tagore programme celebrating Bangladesh's foremost poet, and information relating to the UK's Hay Book Festival.



Monica Ali (born in Dhaka in 20 October 1967) is a British-Bangladeshi and author of Brick Lane, a controversial debut novel which was shortlisted for the prestigious Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 2003. She was voted Granta's Best of Young British Novelists. Brick Lane follows the life of Nazneen, a Bangladeshi woman from Sylhet who moves to the British-Bangladeshi community in London. It was made into a successful film in 2007, starring the actress Tannishtha Chatterjee. Monica Ali's father is originally from Mymensingh (her mother is of British origin).

VALUES

Respect for human rights and democratic principles underpin the policies of Bangladesh and the EU, and are essential elements in their partnership. More than being just declarations of intent, they involve action.

EU Institutions provided financial support for Bangladesh's voter registration drive in 2008, which involved the issuing of voter identity cards with photographs for 80 million people. The EU is continuing to support the strengthening of Bangladesh's electoral institutions, notably including its ongoing support for the Election Commission (see box), and EU Institutions are also actively supporting the implementation of the Peace Accord in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the development of village courts, and the implementation of the census.

The EU's support for democracy in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a parliamentary democracy, with a legislature of 345 members elected for 5-year terms.

EU Institutions played a major role in supporting preparations for Bangladesh's last general election, which was held at the end of 2008, providing most of the funding for a major project to overhaul the electoral roll and provide voter identity cards, with photographs. The EU's Election Observation Mission (EOM) concluded that the hallmarks of the 2008 election were professionalism, transparency and credibility, and that the election broadly met international standards. The EOM reported that the outcome of the election appeared to reflect the will of the people of Bangladesh and the EOM observers reported no patterns of fraud in the process. Their final report also made a number of recommendations on making further improvements to the conduct of future elections.

The EU is now helping to strengthen democracy in Bangladesh through funding a US\$20 million Strengthening Election Management in Bangladesh project. This 5-year project aims to enhance and further consolidate the capacities of the Bangladesh Election Commission to conduct fair, credible and transparent elections.

Freedom of expression

The press freedom index of 'Reporters Without Borders' ranks Bangladesh 126th out of 167 countries.

EU diplomatic missions engage frequently with the national press and broadcasting media in Bangladesh, including through joint press conferences of the EU Heads of Mission. The discussions, which often include lively questions-and-answers sessions, almost always receive widespread coverage.

The EU's Human Rights Road Shows, which in recent years have been held in all the country's administrative provinces, have been attended by dozens of participants from local Civil Society Organisations and NGOs.

ILO Conventions

Bangladesh has ratified:

- Prohibition of forced labour (Conventions 29 and 105);
- Non-discrimination in employment (Conventions 100 and 111); and
- Freedom of association and of collective bargaining (Conventions Nos. 87 and 98).
- On the prohibition of child labour, Bangladesh has ratified Convention 182, but not Convention 138 on the minimum age of employment.
- Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention, 1957 (No. 107)

Support for strengthening human rights in Bangladesh

Bangladesh's Cooperation Agreement with the EU begins with a commitment to human rights: 'Respect for human rights and democratic principles as laid down in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights underpins the domestic and international policies of the Parties, and constitutes an essential element of this Agreement' (Article 1). Fundamental human rights are also enshrined in Bangladesh's Constitution, with articles to protect an impressive array of specific human rights (including non-discrimination, equality before the law, safeguards over arrest and detention, and various other freedoms).

The country underwent its first Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in February 2009. UNHRC members made 42 specific recommendations, and the Bangladesh delegation, headed by the Foreign Minister, agreed and expressed a strong commitment to implement the recommendations and improve the human rights situation.

The EU, with the Government's agreement, is supporting a large number of projects aimed in various ways at strengthening human rights in Bangladesh. Some of these are funded collectively by EU Institutions, while others are funded by EU Member States' bilateral programmes. In June 2011 there were about 100 such projects underway.

Justice faces significant capacity constraints. More than 100,000 cases (43,000 cases in Dhaka, alone) are currently pending, and the courts only have capacity to deal with a fraction of these annually. As a result, many detainees spend years in prison awaiting trial.

Denmark is actively supporting improved access to a Justice System where the human rights of citizens should be respected and promoted, and where disadvantaged people, especially women and indigenous peoples, can utilise the justice system to claim redress; Denmark is supporting increased accountability of duty bearers at all levels; empowering disadvantaged people (especially women) and local institutions for defending rights violations; improving local formal judiciary systems to handle cases effectively; and building institutional capacities of the Judiciary Administration Training Institute. Germany provides training for paralegals and prison officers, technical equipment, and funded a survey to provide baseline information, to improve legal protection, reduce overcrowding and improve conditions in prisons. The UK also funds a safety and justice programme, comprising; a Police Reform Programme (see below), a Community Legal Services project and Justice Sector Strategic Fund (developing a national strategic vision for justice sector reform.)

Torture and detention conditions

Torture is forbidden by the Constitution, but there is no specific and easily applicable law against torture. Bangladesh has ratified the Convention Against Torture (CAT), but not the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. (OPCAT).

The European Commission-funded 'Education on the Convention against Torture and OPCAT Awareness Programme' presses for criminalisation of torture through creating awareness about CAT and OPCAT, as part of monitoring and policy advocacy. In the UK-funded Police Reform Programme, the police are given Human Rights sensitisation training, and the programme's community policing activities focus upon making the police more transparent, accountable and responsive to community concerns.

Children's rights

Bangladesh ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990, but entered two reservations on freedom of religion, and on adoption. Also, Bangladesh is not a party to the 1980 Hague Convention on the civil aspects of International Child Abduction, which is a particular cause for concern. The Children Act of 1974 is the only legislation specifically addressing children, and only deals with children acting against the law, or those who are in need of protection. Other relevant provisions are spread across a variety of laws, often predating the CRC.

In partnership with the Government, Spain financed a project to build the capacities of local partners in supporting improved feeding practices for young children in three Upazilas in northern Bangladesh. The Netherlands supports adolescent girls and boys with necessary skills and information to prevent discrimination, and to combat violence in urban slums. The EU, through its institutions, is providing financial support for the developing development of a safety net for urban, marginalised and disadvantaged children, and is providing life skills development and empowerment for

adolescent girls. Its funding also fosters capacity enhancement of NGOs, local authorities and local communities in effective delivery of early childhood care and development in disaster-prone areas. Finally, Funding from EU institutions are also helping to building build the capacities of Non-State Actors (NSAs) and Local Authorities for sustainable reductions in child poverty, child labour & child rights violations, thus empowering extremely poor children & improving the conditions of working children. The UK is supporting the Underprivileged Children's Education Fund, providing education and training to children who would otherwise be excluded. 95% of students go on to full time employment (14,000 to date).

Women's rights

Bangladesh's Constitution guarantees equal legal rights to all citizens, and specifically states that women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of the state and public life. Examples of Bangladesh's laws which help protect women include: the Child Marriage Restraint Act (1939), the Dowry Prohibition Act (1980), the Suppression of Violence against Women and Children (2000, amended in 2003), the Acid Control Act (2002), and the Domestic Violence Act (2010). The Government has introduced a Women's Development Policy, and Bangladesh has also ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Bangladesh is a country where women can and do get to the very top of society, although it can still be difficult. Moreover, women's rights in Bangladesh are improving, thanks to the efforts of women at grass-roots levels. Many women now serve on local government councils and Bangladesh has made major strides in closing the gender gap for enrolment in primary and secondary school, with girls now outnumbering boys. Women are also gaining greater independence, thanks to the country's economic development. Expanded access to microcredit has empowered women and improved their livelihoods, and the garments industry in Bangladesh mostly employs young women: more than 2 million of them.

Yet, at the same time, many women in Bangladesh are still at a disadvantage.

Official statistics show that girls are more likely than boys to be underweight, and less likely to attend tertiary education. On tests of knowledge and skills, girls still do worse than boys. They also suffer higher dropout rates and lower completion rates in secondary education. Part of the reason for this is that Bangladesh still has one of the highest rates of child marriage and adolescent motherhood in the world. Government statistics show that the average age of women's marriage is 14.8 years, despite a legal minimum of 18 years for women (21 for men). 40% of women aged 20-24 have given birth before the age of 18. Maternal mortality remains high. Only 15% of pregnant women give birth in medical institutions, and on average about 20 pregnant women and 400 newborn babies die every day in Bangladesh. Violence against women and girls is also disturbingly high, with 14% of maternal deaths attributable to violence.

Other data shows that Bangladesh is nevertheless making impressive gains in gender equality. Access to primary health care, including antenatal and postnatal care, has been expanded. Inequality in infant mortality has been reversed, with infant mortality now lower for girls than for boys. Females have a life expectancy of 68.7 years, whilst that of males is 66.1 years. The contraceptive prevalence rate rose from less than 10% in 1975 to 56% in 2009. The country nearly halved its fertility rates from 1990 to 2009, and has rapidly improved overall child mortality rates.

The European Union (EU) supports women's rights in Bangladesh by using its development assistance programmes – those provided through the EU Institutions' assistance plus the bilateral programmes of the EU's Member States – to support projects which help women in practical ways. Some examples include: the promotion of human rights for preventing violence and discrimination against women and girls; support for legal and social empowerment of women; a multi-country programme to foster political participation and gender equity in Bangladesh and other countries; support for gender mainstreaming in local governance; and support for establishing the Department of Women and Gender Studies at Dhaka University. The issue of gender equality is also integrated into other EU-funded development

assistance activities. For example, food and livelihood security assistance often targets ultra-poor women with children, and special attention is paid to promoting gender equality in support provided for primary education.

Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord

The Chittagong Hill Tracts region (CHT) has a population of about 1.5 million, including 11 indigenous groups and Bengali communities. It is one of the least developed areas of Bangladesh, and poverty is widespread. After more than 25 years of insurgency, demands for cultural distinctiveness and partial autonomy were presented to the Government of Bangladesh by the indigenous communities of CHT. In 1997, after a successful dialogue, a Peace Accord was signed providing limited self-rule for the region.

The EU-funded CHT Development Facility Project has reached over 3,000 villages to help build confidence in support of the 1997 CHT Peace Accord, through social development and empowerment of communities in the CHT. Also, in support of the Peace Accord's implementation, Spain provides food security support for the most vulnerable people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Denmark supports the strengthening of land rights, through building the capacities of primary stake-holders and partners for defending the poor, and the indigenous peoples' land and natural resources rights. This helps the rights of the indigenous people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts to be better understood, respected and promoted.

Rohingyas

Rohingyas are people from an area of Myanmar adjoining Bangladesh. Following waves of repression by Myanmar's army, many fled across the border into Bangladesh, which is now home to up to 30,000 officially recognised Rohingya refugees, accommodated in two UNHCR camps. There are also an estimated 400,000 undocumented Rohingyas living amongst Bangladeshi communities. As Rohingyas lack citizenship of any country and are unrecognised as refugees, they have no legal status, and are thus amongst the most vulnerable people in one of Bangladesh's most deprived regions.

The European Union, through its institutions, provides direct basic humanitarian assistance to the Rohingyas, aiding thousands of people living in makeshift camps in Leda and Kutapalong.. The EU's institutions, through UNHCR, have also provided, over the years, some €25 million in assistance to those registered refugees who have been living in official camps since 1992. EU support in official refugee camps in Cox's Bazar District also increases opportunities for refugees to lead more productive lives through improved capacities, livelihood activities, and access to skills training, income generation and self-development, pending their voluntary return to Myanmar.

Governance and capacity of state institutions

Parliament plays a crucial role in scrutinising and holding the government accountable. In support of this, EU partners support a number of projects geared at increasing the performance of central government ministries and local government institutions. A flag-ship intervention for public finance management reform - the Strengthening Public Expenditure Management Programme, with total donor contributions of more than €80 million (the biggest such project worldwide) is implemented by the Bangladesh Ministry of Finance, with the World Bank as leading agency and European Union institutions, the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark and Canada as co-funders:.

The programme aims to achieve sound financial management in a transparent and accountable manner by increasing links between policy, planning, budgeting and performance, by improving systems, and by strengthening reporting, public oversight, and the levels of scrutiny. All of these are crucial factors for improving service delivery, making growth sustainable and reducing poverty. The programme works with the Ministry of Finance and the central Audit Office of the country, to build the capacity of Parliament, particularly through the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and other key committees; and to build the capacities of the public to review PFM activities and strengthen demands for improvement, through support to civil society groups.

Tackling Corruption

Corruption is a major contributor to global poverty. The poor are usually hit hardest, with an estimated 4% of poor people's meagre incomes lost to corruption. Bangladesh has ratified the UN's Convention against Corruption, and Transparency International's 2010 index now ranks Bangladesh 134th out of 178 countries (178th being the most corrupt).

The Governments of Sweden, Denmark, the UK and Switzerland provide support to Transparency International in Bangladesh, in its work to combat corruption in the country. The programme, 'Paribartan – Driving Change' (April 2009-March 2014) works with NGOs and the Government of Bangladesh, to create awareness among citizens, get them involved, strive for openness and transparency in official business, and to run campaigns. The project is working to change policies and practices, to improve governance in Bangladesh, by strengthening the National Integrity System, reduce costs caused by corruption, and improve citizens' access to entitlements through a social movement against corruption. By intensifying national level advocacy and increasing citizens' involvement, the project strives to achieve better enforcement of policies, laws and rules at national and local levels.

The programme covers 45 of the country's 64 regions. "Integrity Pledges" have been signed with 25 institutions, making it easier for citizens to demand accountability and ensure promised services are delivered free of bribes. The islands of integrity include zero tolerance for corruption, promotion of transparency, improved accountability, stakeholder participation, and improved quality of services.

For scaling up the reforms, the programme has developed a Partnership Policy to build alliances with NGOs at the local level. The programme also builds networks and alliances at national level, to strengthen channels for communicating the voices of citizens.

As a result of the programme, students at higher levels have access to materials on corruption and its consequences. Non-profit networks of citizens have been created to work for increased openness and demands for accountability, and, through associated activities they have inspired involvement and awareness, primarily amongst younger citizens.

EU Governance Sector Donors	EU Sector Disbursements in € million			
	2009	2010	2011	Totals
EU (European Commission)	20.6	20.0	17.0	€57.6 million
UK	14.3	20.1	17.8	€ 52.2 million
Denmark	9.9	8.0	6.6	€24.5 million
Netherlands	3.7	4.1	2.7	€10.5 million
Germany	3.6	2.4	2.3	€8.3 million
Sweden	0.8	1.0	0.8	€2.6 million
Totals	€52.9 million	€55.6 million	€47.2 million	€155.7 million

TRADE & INVESTMENT

Bangladesh's economic performance over the past two decades has been dynamic and strong. Foreign investment into Bangladesh and trade with other countries (especially the EU), have contributed greatly to this. New jobs have been created and the skills base of the country has been improved, increasing its potential productivity and earnings for the future. Over half Bangladesh's exports go to the EU, thanks in part to the good market access which the EU offers to exports from Bangladesh.

Some of the EU businesses with substantial commercial activities, employing many people in Bangladesh, include:

ABB, Advanced Logistics Group, Aldi, Angel Composite Knitting Industries Ltd, AP Møller Mærsk Group, Arla Food Ingredients, Auchan, BASF, BAT, Benetton, BOC/Linde, Brummer and Partners, B-YO-KOM, C&A, Carrefour, Casino, Cementos Molins, CGG-Bureau Veritas, CMA-CGM, Cobra-ACS, Coin, Cora, Decathlon, Degremont, DHL, DSV Transport, El Corte Inglés, EOS textile, Ericsson, Euromode, Europoint, G4S, Geodis, Gerico engineering, Grameen Danone, Grameen Veolia, Glaxo SmithKline, Güldenpfennig, H&M, Haldor Topsøe, Heidelberg Cement, Hemtex, Holcim, HSBC, IKEA, Inditex, Indra, Isolux Corsan., JHK Trader, KappAhl, Karstadt, Kento Asia, Kik, Lafarge, Losan, Lotto, Metro Group, Montagut group, MQ, Multiline, Nath, Nestlé, Nokia, Nordic Woods, Novartis, Novo Nordisk, Otto Group, Oviessse, Pamton-Tac, Philips, Picard Bangladesh, Reckitt Benckiser, Roca, S.Oliver, Sanofi, SDV, SGS, Siemens, Somewhere In, Spie Oil & Gas, Standard Chartered Bank, Syngenta, Telenor, Terranova, Tesco, TNT, Toads, Totalgaz, TÜV Süd, Unilever, VizRT, Volvo, Zannier, and Zuellig Pharma.

Years	Exports to EU (€m)	Variation (% year-on-year)	Imports from EU (€m)	Variation (% year-on-year)	Balances (€m)	Total Trade Values (€m)
2007	5,125	-3.6%	1,022	-5.5%	+4,103	6,147
2008	5,464	+6.6%	1,066	+4.3%	+4,398	6,530
2009	5,849	+7.0%	1,006	-5.6%	+4,843	6,855
2010	6,690	+14.4%	1,619	+60.9%	+5,071	8,309
2011	8,585	+28.3%	1,702	+5.1%	+6,883	10,287
5-year Totals	€31,713 m		€6,415 m		€25,298 m	€38,128 m
Avg. Growth p.a. (%)		13.8%		13.6%		13.7%
2011 Q1	2,125		574		+1,551	2,699
2011 Q2	2,069		377		+1,692	2,446
2011 Q3	2,520		360		+2,160	2,879
2011 Q4	1,872		390		+1,481	2,262

European enterprises, by bringing ‘new’ money into Bangladesh, create new jobs, and, in doing so, can often help to improve employment practices and working conditions. As partners in business innovation they often bring state-of-the-art technologies, top-quality products and services, and the best international business practices, from which Bangladeshi-owned businesses learn and grow. Foreign investors raise the level of Bangladeshi production, so it can compete at an international level, and such investments diversify Bangladesh’s economy, thus reducing its vulnerability to shocks. With the training which accompanies new investment, the skills base for the working population is also expanded.

Particular advantages of investing in Bangladesh include low unit-labour costs, the steadily growing domestic market combined with a large population, and good access for exports from Bangladesh to the EU market. Corruption is said to be endemic throughout business, and this points to a ‘brand image’ problem for Bangladesh. The most challenging sectors for that seem to be those where businesses need to be heavily engaged with public agencies.

By far the most prominent export industry in Bangladesh is textiles & clothing (primarily, ready-made garments), which represents about 90% of Bangladesh's total exports to the EU. Footwear, leather products and bicycle exports to the EU have also recorded growth as proportions of Bangladesh’s exports.

Major items in trade between Bangladesh and the EU

Bangladesh's main exports to the EU are: garments, frozen shrimps, leather and leather products, raw jute and jute products, tea, and pharmaceuticals.

The EU's main exports to Bangladesh are: machinery, equipment, chemicals and transport goods.

Many EU enterprises in Bangladesh have brought Corporate Social Responsibility policies and initiatives to their workplaces in the country, and such innovations can make important long-term contributions towards successful business and positive, work-related change. For example, the ILO reports child labour as having been effectively eradicated from the ready-made garments industry.

There is still much to be done in terms of improving health and safety conditions in many workplaces, including such basic problems as inadequate fire precautions, lack of safety equipment, and the structural instability of some factory buildings. EU enterprises are involved in efforts to make tangible progress on these concerns (see box).

Several European enterprises are assisting the Government and the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association to develop an industry-wide programme to enhance fire and building safety in the garment industry in Bangladesh. The EU is also helping to improve health and safety at work through programmes such as Better Work and Standards, which seeks to improve working conditions in the fisheries and garment industries. The EU-funded Bangladesh Investment Climate Fund supports capacity-building in areas such as environmental compliance and occupational health and safety.

Bangladesh's market access to the EU

One of the advantages which Bangladesh has is its preferred position under the EU’s ‘Everything But Arms’ arrangement, which grants duty-free and quota-free access to all goods, except arms, originating in the least-developed countries (LDCs).

However, until 2011 the EU's "rules of origin" (identifying from which countries product components originated) excluded many of the export items made in Bangladesh which used imported inputs. For example, less than 30% of men's basic woven shirt exports previously qualified because they were made from fabrics imported from other countries which did not fall into ‘rules of origin’ eligibility.

At the start of 2011 the EU introduced new rules of origin for exports from LDCs. These allow duty-free access for all garments, including those made from imported fabrics (which under the EU's previous rules still incurred duty). This has had a positive impact on Bangladesh's exports of woven products to the EU. It is also helping Bangladesh to attract new investment in

production of higher-value woven products, such as ladies' fashionable dress, suits, jackets and blazers.

The EU’s new rules of origin have also substantially reduced the minimum percentage of industrial (non-textile) products’ parts to have originated in Bangladesh. For example, exporting a bicycle from Bangladesh previously required 70 % domestic inputs under the old rules of origin. The new rule for LDCs is set at only 30% local inputs, which is already helping Bangladesh to diversify its exports. Its exports of bicycles to the EU rose from about €250 million in 2010 to more than €450 million in 2011.

Shipbuilding

Shipbuilding is a rapidly-developing new sector of Bangladesh's export industry. There are more than 180 shipyards in the country, most of which are involved in production and maintenance of relatively small transport ships. 10 shipyards are able to produce trawlers, container ships, multipurpose vessels, tankers, various types of tugs, patrol boats, passenger vessels, seismic vessels and fisheries research vessels.

Bangladesh also has the advantage of a supply of skilled workers, since many Bangladeshis work in the shipyards of countries such as Singapore and Dubai. Bangladesh exported its first ship to Denmark in 2008.

Export volumes grew from \$9 million in FY2010 to \$40 million in FY2011, and Bangladesh has secured some \$600 million of export orders to deliver 50 ships by 2013. From the EU, orders have been placed by Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands to date.

The prospects for shipbuilding in Bangladesh seem very bright, and the industry could represent up to 5% of the country's GDP by 2015, thus diversifying the economy even further. With more than half the world's ships more than 20 years old, many will require replacement in the next 5-10 years. Domestic demand is also significant because Bangladesh has a vast network of rivers, making inland waterways an essential part of the country's transport system. With shipbuilding in East Asian countries

having become more costly due to steep wage increases, experts have estimated that Bangladesh is now able to build ships at about 15% lower cost than other countries. Its low labour costs give it a particular advantage in building ships such as bulk carriers, which require relatively low levels of technology.

Information and Communications Technology

ICT (Information technology, Communication technology and Telecommunications technology) is also becoming a significant contributor to national income, with many new jobs. One of the driving forces in the ICT industry has been the large number of young Bangladeshis who, having graduated either nationally or internationally, have started up their own IT businesses. The approximate revenue of the local industry is \$250 million, and today employs more than 30,000 people. It has been estimated that over the last 5 years, the industry's annual growth rate has been more than 40%.

Case study of European business involvement in the ICT sector: Denmark

Denmark has had extensive involvement in the ICT industry of Bangladesh. In early 2000, Denmark started supporting the IT industry through its Danida private sector development programme. Many of the companies were pioneers within their areas. Since the programme started, 19 Danish IT companies, and 27 IT and IT-related joint ventures/ long term partnerships have been supported in their quest for technology transfer and know-how to their Bangladeshi colleagues. There are 3-4 more projects in the pipeline. There are also about 8-10 other Danish companies working on outsourcing with Bangladeshi IT companies.

Telecommunications

Bangladesh has been able to attract large-scale foreign direct investment in telecommunications. The telecoms industry is capital-intensive, with large investments required, making a predictable investment framework essential.

Export Processing Zones (EPZs)

Export Processing Zones, which offer incentives to investors, are located in Chittagong, Dhaka, Mongla, Ishurdi, Comilla and Syedpur (Nilphamari).

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

AN INTRODUCTION TO EU DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN BANGLADESH

It is important to donors that the money they provide to countries is properly used. EU assistance to Bangladesh, running at nearly half a billion € per year, is almost exclusively grant money, and must be utilised as effectively as possible for the benefit of the Bangladeshi people. The more effective the aid, the more it helps Bangladesh to achieve its goal of becoming a middle-income country by 2021.

There are currently over 40 bilateral and multilateral development partners active in Bangladesh, 7 of which are European Union partners: Denmark, the European Union's Institutions, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. New donors, such as China and India have, following the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan (South Korea) in 2011, also indicated their interest in joining coordination efforts between all donors and the Government in Bangladesh. Joint harmonisation and coordination between Bangladesh's development partners have therefore intensified, recently.

Overseas Development Assistance Trends

According to data aggregated by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development in Dhaka, the total volume of foreign aid since 1971 was US\$52.6 billion. From US\$6.6 billion in the first decade of Bangladesh's independence, foreign aid more than doubled to US\$14.1 billion in the second decade (1980-1990). In the third decade (1990-2000), foreign aid increased by about 10% to US\$15.6 billion, before reaching US\$16.2 billion during 2000-2010. In fiscal year (FY) 2009/10, alone, the amount of foreign aid disbursed is reported to have been US\$2.2 billion.

Most of the foreign aid received by Bangladesh comes in three forms: food aid, commodity aid, and project aid. The shares of each of these three forms of aid have varied over time. While in the early years after independence commodity aid and food aid were the dominant forms of aid, the share of project aid grew over the years, from 26% in 1971-1980

to 94% in 2000-2010. In FY 2009/10, according to the figures computed by FABA, project aid constituted 96% of total foreign aid.

Source: Aid Management in Bangladesh – A Review of Policies and Procedures, Aid Effectiveness Unit, Economic Relations Division at the Ministry of Finance of Bangladesh, August 2011
http://www.lcgbangladesh.org/AEWG/AMR_Approved%20version.pdf

The formal structure for dialogue in Bangladesh is via the Local Consultative Groups (LCG), composed of Government and Development Partner representatives. The focus of the LCG Plenary meetings are to review progress on development issues, including national development strategies, achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to prepare for and follow-up on the Bangladesh Development Forum (BDF). Coordination between government and donors at sector levels is organised in the LCG Sector Working Groups.

EU development partners coordinate within the wider donor community in Bangladesh, and engage in promoting overall aid effectiveness. Coordination also takes place within jointly-financed sector programmes, receiving support from a wide range of donors, as well as in the sectoral Working Groups of the Local Consultative Group.

Amongst EU partners, plus with Norway and Switzerland (EU+), there is also intensive formal and informal dialogue internally at all levels, and the so-called EU+ Development Group is represented in the LCG Executive Committee with two representatives.

The Government's commitment to promoting this collaboration is clearly high. Bangladesh has a complex aid environment, and the Government has to deal with a rather fragmented donor structure, which provides its own challenges for harmonisation and coordination.

The Sixth 5-Year Plan

The Government of Bangladesh's sixth five-year plan, approved in June 2011, aims to achieve more than 7% p.a. economic growth and to limit inflation to less than 7% during the plan period to 2015. With the goal of ensuring inclusive economic growth, the plan has set a target for reducing poverty to 22% by 2015, and for creating ten million new jobs through expanding the manufacturing sector.

The plan targets investments of Tk13.5 trillion in five years. Of the total investment, 77.2% is expected to arise from the private sector, with the rest from the public sector.

A Joint Cooperation Strategy, signed in June 2012, was developed against this background, as a compact between the Government and its Development Partners, to gradually reform aid management systems in line with commitments made at international meetings in Paris, Accra, and Busan. This coincides with support for governance reforms in associated areas, such as improving public financial management and capacity building reform of the civil service.

Joint Cooperation Strategy

The Government and its Development Partners have taken significant steps to reform their relationships, and to establish mutual accountability mechanisms. This culminated in the formulation of the Joint Cooperation Strategy (JCS), signed by the Government and 18 of its Development Partners on 2 June 2010. A Joint Cooperation Strategy Action Plan was formulated, in order to convert policy commitments into practical changes. The JCS Action plan is a living document, updated annually, and by mutual agreement between the Government and its Development Partners. It is totally consistent with recent international commitments at Busan.

The Millennium Development Goals

The UNDP, which assists the government to monitor Bangladesh's progress in achieving its Millennium Development Goals by 2015, has reported as follows:

Millennium Development Goals – Bangladesh	Performance to date
1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger	Bangladesh is well on track to achieving Goal 1, with poverty coming down to 31.5%, according to latest estimates. The poverty gap ratio also decreased dramatically to 9.0 at the last assessment.
2: Achieve Universal Primary Education	Whilst a significant 87% has been achieved in terms of primary school enrolment, dropout rates remain high and therefore primary school completion rates are low. Progress has been made in adult literacy, at 54% in 2005, but additional efforts are needed to reach the target.
3: Promote Gender Equality & Empower Women	Bangladesh has achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education, together with being on track regarding percentage of women employed in Agriculture.
4: Reduce Child Mortality	The country is on track with regard to achieving this goal. Significant strides have been made in all three indicators and if the trend continues, the country will meet the 2015 target well ahead of schedule.
5: Improve Maternal Health	Although the maternal mortality ratio is on track, it is a challenge for Bangladesh to maintain the rate, given complex socio-economic factors affecting the goal. The number of skilled birth attendants is low.
6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases	Bangladesh has made some progress in combating the spread of malaria, with prevalence dropping from 42 cases per 100,000 in 2001 to 34 in 2005.
7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability	Whilst significant progress has been made in access to safe drinking water and sanitary latrines in urban areas, they remain a challenge in rural areas. Also, maintaining wetlands and biodiversity is still a challenge.
8: Develop a Global partnership for Development	The penetration of telephone lines and internet, particularly cell phone usage, has increased to a great extent but the youth employment rate is still low.
<p>Data for MDGs used in this book, from: Excerpt from Government of Bangladesh Health Bulletin 2010 – ‘Chapter 3 - The Millennium Development Goals: Where Bangladesh Stands?’; ‘Status of MDGs in Bangladesh’ - http://www.undp.org.bd/mdgs.php - UNDP, Bangladesh; ‘MDG Scorecards’ – UNDP Bangladesh – updated March 2010.</p>	

Key Links:

The Development Strategy of Bangladesh, the Sixth Five Year Plan, is available on the Web: http://www.plancomm.gov.bd/sixth_five_year_plan.asp
 Information about donor coordination in Bangladesh is published on the Website of the Local Consultative Group: <http://www.lcgbangladesh.org/h>
 Interactive EU Donor Atlas 2011: <http://development.donoratlas.eu/home.html>
 Also check out the EU knowledge platform to connect the development community - <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/>

A review of assistance to each of the identified sectors follows...

TOTAL EUROPEAN UNION ASSISTANCE TO BANGLADESH – 2009-2011 inclusive.

Figures in € millions

	Den mark	European Union (collectively)	Germany	Netherlands	Spain	Sweden	UK	Totals
Human Resources Development		88.1	42.1	71.0		54.1	161.6	€ 416.4 m
Income & Poverty	38.7	126.0	17.6	2.0	7.7		187.1	€ 379.1 m
Governance	24.5	57.6	8.3	10.5		2.6	52.2	€ 155.7 m
Environmental Sustainability	2.7	18.2	7.1	31.0	21.7	14.5	22.0	€ 117.2 m
Water & Sanitation	26.0			50.3			24.5	€ 100.8 m
Humanitarian Assistance		51.2	0.7			0.7	9.5	€ 62.1 m
Gender Equality		4.1	2.2	2.2	19.2	2.1	20.6	€ 50.4 m
Energy & Infrastructure			48.1					€ 48.1 m
Urban			7.6				32.6	€ 40.2 m
Totals 2009-11	€91.9m	€345.2m	€133.7m	€167.0m	€48.6m	€74.0m	€510.1m	€1,370.5m

Comparative MDG Performances of Bangladesh Districts



Districts by MDG performance

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics has categorised the districts of Bangladesh into 5 groups, based on MDG performance which is measured across 9 indicators, viz. (i) net attendance rate in primary education; (ii) proportion of pupils reaching grade five from grade one; (iii) ratio of girls to boys in primary school; (iv) ratio of girls to boys in secondary school; (v) under-5 mortality rate; (vi) proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel; (vii) proportion of women aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS; (viii) proportion of population using safe drinking water; and (ix) proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility. Each district's score was calculated from the sum of each of the 9 indicators.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Health

Supporting improvements in Health is an investment in Bangladesh's main resource (its people), and another key factor in economic progress and poverty reduction. To ensure everybody has access to effective health services, the European Union partners have been major contributors to the Health sector.

With a large and growing population, and with limited resources at hand, providing health services for everybody is a major challenge for the Government. Despite being severely underfunded, there have been remarkable achievements in some areas of the health sector, and Bangladesh has achieved creditable progress on selected Millennium Development Goals, including child health (MDG 4), maternal health (MDG 5) and reductions in some communicable diseases (MDG 6).

Bangladesh received, in September 2011, a UN Millennium Development Goal Award from the United Nations for its progress in reducing the child mortality rate.

Yet, maternal mortality is still a cause for concern, arising from limited access to mother and child health services. There has been progress in certain areas of health service delivery, particularly in emergency obstetrics and deepening the poor's use of services. Nevertheless, greater progress in neo-natal health and nutrition, along with addressing health system inefficiencies, are critical to successfully achieving the related Millennium Development Goals.

Birthing Huts

Despite significant progress in health, more than 7,000 pregnant women, and more than 120,000 newborns die each year in Bangladesh. The UK has prioritised improving maternal health and reducing child mortality as part of its commitment to helping Bangladesh to achieve its Millennium Development Goals.



In Rangpur, local women have been trained to provide maternal and newborn care services in safe delivery centres – called 'Birthing Huts' – established in their home. Through the UK-funded BRAC Maternal, Neonatal and Child Survival programme, Sharmin (23 years old) and many others received maternal healthcare training from the local hospitals.

When asked why women chose to have their babies in a birthing hut instead of their homes, Sharmim said "Birth attendants cannot travel to homes at odd hours, so they make the birthing hut fully equipped to deliver babies. Women feel safe here, with good helping hands and good hygiene."

Asked if she faces any obstacles from the elderly or the religious community, she said, "Women in the rural side are now more aware of safe delivery, and prefer the birthing hut or trained birth attendant more than the traditional methods. One of the elderly women who was mostly against the birthing hut recently asked for my help and advice for her own daughter-in-law".

Over the past ten years, the Government has implemented two major health programmes targeted at improving child and maternal health, with donor support, including from the EU. The Netherlands is supporting increased maternal, neonatal and child survival rates in rural areas by working with providers, as well as supporting strengthened referral linkages between public and private health facilities, and providing improved public emergency obstetric care. Most support is directly channelled through the Government, to strengthen national ownership and capacity development in the Health sector, and, to complement the efforts of the Government, the European Union also works with UN agencies and other non-governmental organisations to utilise expertise which they can bring to the sector. For example, the Joint UN Maternal and Neonatal Health Initiative project is being implemented by three UN agencies, working with the European Union, the UK and Canadian financing, to strengthen organisations through innovative approaches addressing poor maternal and neo-natal health. Similarly, the European Union also works with UNDP on health and education issues in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Education

Bangladesh's education system is one of the largest in the world, with roughly 20 million students at primary and 11 million at secondary level. The country is often praised for its gender parity in primary and secondary education, and the increase in primary education enrolment, from 74% in 1999 to 95.6% in 2010 has been dramatic. In comparative South Asian terms, Bangladesh has achieved remarkably high rates, with the school completion rate increasing from 52.1% in 2005 to 60.2%. But there is still a lot of work to do, to achieve the country's goals. Although Bangladesh is on track to achieve its Net Enrolment target in Education, the drop-out rates are still very high. Enrolling all children, especially hard-to-reach children, is a challenge, as are ensuring quality of education for children who are already enrolled in schools and promoting gender equity in tertiary education. Furthermore, low quality education, plus pressures from poverty, early marriage, natural disasters and child labour, lead to those high drop-out rates and low levels of numeracy and literacy skills. Significant challenges remain, therefore, before targets and access for universal and quality primary education can be achieved and sustained.



Poppy loves her school

Poppy, 7, lives on a boat in the Gypsy community of Muladi in southern Bangladesh. She had little chance to play and to be with other children and no opportunity to receive an education until an NGO school was opened close to her home, funded by European Union Institutions.

"I played alone before, but now I have lots of friends in my school. I love my school."

Poppy's community is isolated from land-based settlements and is extremely vulnerable to food shortages, natural disasters and diseases. When her mother, Shongho, heard that a school was being established for their children, she eagerly enrolled her daughter:

"People of other communities do not accept us, so I could not send her to a school before".

The European Union has supported Education in Bangladesh since 1993. Presently, EU Institutions and Member States are co-financing the Third Primary Education Development Programme for improving primary education at the national level, in cooperation with the Government and other development partners. It also includes support for pre-primary education.

The European Union (institutions and Member States) also supports non-governmental organisations to facilitate alternative schooling for children who are not within reach of the government system. On the basis of successful implementation of previous non-formal primary education projects, a follow-up programme called 'Supporting the Hardest to Reach Children through Basic Education', started at the end of 2011. Thanks to this support, an estimated 650,000 children from remote areas will complete their primary education cycle in the coming years. Additionally, the European Union supports education initiatives in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, to help

increase the literacy rate in this culturally and linguistically diverse region of Bangladesh, and to foster progress with the 1997 Peace Accord.

The Erasmus Mundus programme, funded by the EU's institutions, aims to enhance quality in higher education through scholarships and academic cooperation between Europe and the rest of the world, including Bangladesh. The programme offers financial support for institutions, and scholarships for individuals, and many in Bangladesh have taken advantage of this. Funding is made available for Masters and Doctor's degrees, for partnerships between European and Bangladeshi higher education institutions, for scholarships for students and academics, and for projects to promote higher education worldwide

Marufa Akhter graduated from Khulna University and, with the support of an EU-funded Erasmus Mundus scholarship, she studied in two EU universities (Copenhagen in Denmark, and Bangor in Wales, UK). Her subject was Forestry and the Environment. She enjoyed the very practical approach to the studies in those universities, and in her second year she prepared a thesis, based on that highly practical approach.



'Here, in Bangladesh, we study a colonial-style management of forests, based on the books of foreign experts, and they are not very relevant to Bangladesh. Thanks to my Erasmus Mundus studies in Europe, I was able to find, through my own work and research, the approaches to forest and environment management, which are best suited to the nature and conditions here in Bangladesh, from amongst the many management options which exist in the world.'

She studied with 17 students from 17 countries, and it gave her the opportunity to learn first-hand about forestry management in those countries, too. It gave her a much broader overview for her work, and also valuable exchanges with those students. She feels that now she has 17 extra, very close friends around the world with whom she can always share professional issues.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

For Bangladesh to reach its goal of becoming a middle-income country in the years ahead, the skills of the workforce need urgent upgrading, also. The European Union's institutions are therefore funding a project to reform the technical and vocational education and training system, in partnership with the International Labour Organisation (ILO). It will help ensure that more people can acquire better skills for the labour market, and lead to greater employment opportunities in Bangladesh and abroad, with higher pay and living standards.

A New Vocation

Kamol Chandra is from Norshindi district. He studied in school to class seven, but his father, a poor farmer, couldn't afford to continue funding it, and sent Kamol to his Uncle's house in Dhaka, to work in a shoe factory. He worked 12 to 14 hours every day, six and a half days per week, earning Tk1,500 per month (c.€150), in a dusty working environment with no safety rules and no masks.

The TVET Reform Project, funded by the European Union, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Government of Bangladesh, aims to reform Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), to enable more people to acquire skills with which they can find jobs.



As a young worker in a hazardous workplace, Kamol was encouraged to enrol in vocational training. He enrolled at Khilgaon Vocational Training Centre, supported by the project, and completed a course on motorcycle service mechanics. Kamol, now 19 years old, works with the Walton motorcycle service workshop at its Khilgaon branch. He earns Tk 5,000 per month (c.€50), plus Tk 85 per day for breakfast, lunch and transport. He works 6 days per week, and 8 hours a day, plus enjoys a lunch break. Now, he dreams of running a motorcycle service business of his own in Norshindi.

'I am so happy to work in this service centre, as part of a team, and now I can buy myself a good quality T-shirt and help my family.'

Relevant MDGs (source: UNDP Bangladesh)

MDG 2 - Achieve Universal Primary Education

Key: → = On Track ↑ = Will be achieved by 2015/already achieved ↓ = Not achievable by 2015				
Indicator	Base Years	Latest Estimates	Target for 2015	Remark
2.1 % Net Enrolment in Primary Education	60.5%	91.9%	100%	→
2.2 % Pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5	43.0%	54.9%	100%	↓
2.3% Literacy rate for 15-24 year-olds	36.9%	58.3%	-	↓

MDG 4 - Reduce Child Mortality

Key: → = On Track ↑ = Will be achieved by 2015/already achieved ↓ = Not achievable by 2015				
Indicator	Base Years	Latest Estimates	Target for 2015	Remark
4.1 Under 5 Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)	146	53.8	48.0	→
4.2 Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)	92	41.3	31.3	→
4.3% 1 year-olds immunised against measles	54.0%	82.8%	-	→

MDG 5 - Improve Maternal Health

Key: → = On Track ↑ = Will be achieved by 2015/already achieved ↓ = Not achievable by 2015				
Indicator	Base Years	Latest Estimates	Target for 2015	Remark
5.1 Maternal Mortality Ratio (per 100,000 live births)	574	194.0		↓
5.2 % Births attended by Skilled Health Personnel	5.0%	26.5%		↓
5.3% Contraceptive Prevalence Rate	39.9%	55.8%		-
5.4 Adolescent birth rate (per 1,000 women)	77	60		-
5.5a % Antenatal care coverage (at least 1 visit)	27.5	52.0		↓
5.5b % Antenatal care coverage (4+ visits)	5.5%	21.0%		↓
5.6 % Unmet need for family planning	19.4%	17.0%		↓

MDG 6 - Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases

Key: → = On Track ↑ = Will be achieved by 2015/already achieved ↓ = Not achievable by 2015				
Indicator	Base Years	Latest Estimates	Target for 2015	Remark
6.1 HIV Prevalence amongst population (per 100,000)	0.005	<0.1	Halting	→
6.2 % Condom use rate		43-66%	No target	↓
6.3 % population 15-24yr olds with comprehensive, correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS		17.7%	-	Low knowledge
6.6a Prevalence of malaria (per 100,000)	776.9	586.0	Halting	→
6.6b Death rate associated with malaria (per 1,000)	1.4	0.6	Halting	→
6.7 % under 5s sleeping under insecticide-treated bed nets (13 malaria-prone districts)	81%	81%	90%	→
6.9a Prevalence of TB per 100,000 population	264	100	Halting	→
6.9b Death rate associated with TB per 100,000	76	50	Halving	→
6.10a % Detection rate of TB under DOTS	21%	70%	Sustain	→
6.10b % Cure rate of TB under DOTS	73%	93%	Sustain	→

Missing indicator numbers refer to those not applicable for Bangladesh

EU Human Resource Development Sector Donors	EU Sector Disbursements in € million			
	2009	2010	2011	Totals
UK	45.7	36.9	79.0	€ 161.6 million
European Union	9.6	55.4	23.1	€ 88.1 million
Netherlands	15.0	30.3	25.7	€ 71.0 million
Sweden	19.8	15.5	18.8	€ 54.1 million
Germany	23.8	10.6	7.7	€ 42.1 million
Totals	€ 113.9 million	€ 148.7 million	€ 154.3 million	€ 416.9 million

INCOME & POVERTY

INCOME & POVERTY

Over the last 20 years, Bangladesh's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew at a real, annual rate of 5.2%, and in 2010 its GDP per head exceeded US\$600. However, even though poverty declined over the same period, it is still at a very high level. Nevertheless, the percentage of those living below the poverty line has declined from nearly 57% in 1991 to 31.5% in 2011, according to some estimates, against an MDG target of 29% by 2015. Bangladesh is well on track to achieving important indicators for MDG 1 (Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger).

Not all indicators for MDG 1 are positive, however. The target for reducing the number of underweight children from 66% in 1991 to 33% in 2015 is not on track for achievement (45% in 2009), and neither is the employment-to-population ratio target of 100% (from 48.5% in 1991 to 59.3% in 2009). The jury is still out on whether the target will be met for the proportion of the population below the minimum level of dietary energy consumption (from a base of 28% in 1991, and a target of 14% in 2015: It was 19.5% in 2005).

As for contributions to the high levels of poverty, adult illiteracy is a major factor at 60%, and approx. 80% of household members have either no education at all, or only primary education. Education is therefore one of the most important factors in the incidence of poverty. Some would argue it is the most important factor. In both rural and urban sectors, those without education have the highest poverty, followed by those with primary education, then secondary education, and then those with higher education. Those without education account for 64% of the nation's poor.

Poor conditions in rural areas aggravate the situation. In agriculture, many are landless and/or are engaged in subsistence farming, and women only earn half of men's earnings in the service and industry sectors. There are large differences between rural and urban areas, also, in access to infrastructure. 80% of urban households have access to electricity, against only 30% of rural households. Virtually no rural households have access to tapped water, and only 9% of rural households live in houses with brick walls.

Sandbar Cropping



Sree Krisno, from Rangpur, used to work as a day labourer, earning a pittance. Often, he couldn't get work to feed his family. Now, he is climbing out of extreme poverty through sandbar cropping, with the support of the UK-funded Economic Empowerment of the Poorest (EEP) Programme, locally known as Shiree ('ladder'). Sandbar Cropping, a new technique in Bangladesh, involves digging holes in sandy residues and filling them with manure, compost and pumpkin seeds, for crops to thrive. As well as being high yielding, pumpkins can be stored for a year, meaning Sree has a crop for his families and also to sell, at times when employment opportunities are low. Sandbar cropping has given Sree the option of growing things for his family and to plan for his family's future.

When asked about how his life is different now, he said, 'Now my family can eat the pumpkins I am growing, and I don't have to buy vegetables. That saves us money, and I can sell the stored pumpkins if I don't have other money coming in. I then use that money to buy rice.'

On the other hand, studies show that only 6% of overall income inequality is explained by differences between rural and urban areas. Dhaka and Chittagong, together account for around 55% of overall, national income

inequality. Inequality within sectors is actually larger in urban areas than overall inequality in the rural areas, presently, so increased urbanisation can raise inequality within sectors.

Since education plays a role in income inequality, especially urban inequality, raising general educational levels and promoting quality education are essential. This is why the EU predominantly supports human resources development, with major grant investments in the Education and Training sectors. Increased income-earning opportunities, especially in rural areas, can offset some of the drift to urban areas. In addition to raising general educational levels and promoting quality education, it is essential to raise agricultural productivity, since poverty is high for those in agriculture. Furthermore, non-agricultural activities also need to be expanded, to capture more people. The non-agriculture group has lower poverty levels.

The Government of Bangladesh and the EU recognise the importance of private sector development for achieving sustainable economic growth which benefits more people. Job creation through increased investment by the private sector, especially in labour-intensive manufacturing sectors, will also fulfil the need for more diversified exports. The target agreed between the Government and its Development Partners in their Development Results Framework is to increase private sector investment as a % of GDP from 19.4% in 2010 to 25% in 2015.

In this context, the EU is providing assistance to strengthening public and private sectors, covering a wide range of sectors, from support to micro and small entrepreneurs, to sector-wide development of an enabling business environment for all industries in the country, as is outlined below.

Trade has always been a driving factor in EU-Bangladesh relations. However, Bangladesh's exports are over-dependent on ready-made garments. Therefore the EU is supporting diversification of the country's exports through assistance with quality and standards. The EU has been one of the largest donors of trade related technical assistance in Bangladesh with a total allocation of € 80 million.

In Bangladesh's Ready Made Garments industry, women are locked in low-wage positions. EU development partners are assisting Bangladesh's garment sector to comply with international standards and improving local labour laws. Beauty Barman - born partially sighted – benefited from this assistance. Being unskilled and disabled, she had trouble finding a job, as well as facing verbal abuse and physical violence. After receiving training, Beauty found a job as a knitting operator – one of the hardest jobs within the garment industry, but with higher pay. Beauty was also provided with psychological support to overcome her distress. Both the operator training and the counselling support have dramatically changed her life.



The private sector accounts for close to 70% of total investment, 80% of GDP, and 90% of total employment in Bangladesh. Successive governments have recognised the need to foster development of the private sector as the main engine of growth. Maintaining a stable macroeconomic framework, opening up the economy, including privatisation of a number of nationalised industries, allowing private investment in many previously restricted sectors (including finance, energy, and telecommunications), and removing government involvement in trade and distribution of agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilisers), have boosted investor confidence and contributed to private sector-led growth. Foreign direct investment (FDI) into Bangladesh has averaged about \$430 million annually in recent years.

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), which constitute 40% of manufacturing output and about 80% of the industrial work force, are hampered by limited access to medium- to long-term credit, markets, technology, and information. Banks and other financial institutions generally prefer large enterprise clients because of the lower transaction costs, and greater availability of collateral. SMEs also fall outside the reach of microfinance schemes, and thus depend more on informal sources of funds at much higher interest rates.

The current, EU-funded Trade & Private Sector Programme (2007-2013) is being implemented in two stages. The first phase focused on the policy framework for trade and private sector development; the legal and institutional frameworks; intellectual property rights; and support for small and medium-sized enterprises, business development services and access to finance. The second phase is promoting export diversification through improving the competitiveness of the private sector.

Improving quality standards in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has limited facilities and inadequate infrastructure to conduct internationally accepted safety, quality and performance tests. To overcome these barriers to trade, the EU is assisting Bangladesh to develop a national quality assurance infrastructure, to help the country to promote its trade with other countries in the world.

Funded by EU Institutions, the National Metrology Institute was set up in 2009. It ensures accuracy and traceability of various products, from food goods to highly engineered goods. The Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute has been strengthened to become effective in standard setting. It includes a modernised library plus data communication services and improved performance monitoring mechanisms. The Bangladesh Accreditation Board has been established and its certificates are internationally recognised.



Photo Courtesy DFID

Ms. Ferdous Ara Begum from the Dhaka Chambers of Commerce, has participated in a number of workshops organised by the Bangladesh Quality Support Programme (BQSP). She said, *'This assistance will help Bangladesh to export a wider variety of products and improve acceptability of Bangladesh products in the international markets. Industries in the local market will also benefit when better measurement techniques are available locally'*.

Support for Shrimp Farming in Bangladesh

Bangladesh's shrimp industry generates over US\$300 million annually and employs 600,000 people. It is the second largest export industry in the country, and the EU is the biggest market for the shrimps. Despite these impressive figures, the industry suffers serious inefficiencies and is exposed to critical social and environmental risks. Following a Government request for assistance in improving sanitary and phytosanitary measures, EU Institutions are addressing these challenges. The support benefits 70 EU-approved shrimp processing plants, 1.9

million shrimp farmers, 3,000 depots owners and 900 female workers. Two laboratories are being established and equipped with testing equipment, and awareness is being improved on food safety, quality, environmental issues and labour law. 1,500 quality control inspectors and fisheries officials are being trained. A traceability system is being introduced, from processing factories to shrimp farms, and sources of contamination in shrimp identified



Shoma Mondol (25) and her husband Gobinda Modol (35) live in Putia Bandha under Khulna district. They have 2 small farms, where they culture Golda shrimp (the sweet water shrimp) during April-November and grow rice during December-March. For many reasons, they have made losses both from rice and shrimp farming. From March 2008 they attended a number of training programmes on good aquaculture practice to make Golda farming profitable. Now, they keep good records of expenditures and sales for the farms, monitor shrimp growth regularly and have access to the fisheries officer for advice. Since the participation of "couple training", Shoma's husband shows great respect for her inputs to the Golda farming, which she manages on top of regular household chores.

'Now I feel better and share my knowledge with the neighbours so they can improve their Golda farming and be good housewives in their families,' she says. 'We are happy and better off than before'.

Food Security

Food security aims to ensure all people have access to enough nutritious and affordable food. Estimates claim that 50 million people (35% of the total population) are today food insecure in Bangladesh, defined as consuming less than 2,122 kcal per day. The number increased by 9 million in the last couple of years due to higher food prices. Of this 50 million, 44% (22 million) are considered severely food insecure with a daily intake of less than 1,805 kcal. The main contributory cause is poverty, itself resulting from landlessness, a dependence on seasonal agricultural labour, combined with a lack of alternative employment opportunities, and high vulnerability to natural disasters. As a result of poor nutrition, 39% of children below five are shorter than normal. Over half the children in the poorest 20% are underweight.

With 31.5 % of the population living below the national poverty line, Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to food price volatility. A 10 % rise in food prices in Bangladesh could drag 4 million extra people into poverty. Food inflation peaked at 14.4% in April 2011, after which it declined to 12.7% in August 2011. The country, not unexpectedly, has a history of social unrest associated with high food price inflation.

Consequently, the Government has tried to mitigate the effects of rising food prices. Official subsidies on various inputs (fertiliser, diesel, etc.) and efforts to expand farm loans have helped to cushion against rising costs. Also, various social safety nets focus on the food needs of vulnerable groups, with cash or food for work, and open market sales of food reserves at subsidised prices. Bangladesh is now nearly self-sufficient for its rice requirements. Food imports have become more diversified as Bangladesh has moved away from traditional source markets such as India, to others in Pakistan, Thailand, and Vietnam, and this has also helped hold down food costs and avoid the vulnerability of depending upon one market. The

biggest challenge is to stabilise food prices whilst assuring farmers a fair return.

The European Commission has a wide array of food security programmes in Bangladesh directly benefiting approximately 300,000 households (representing 1.5 million beneficiaries). The focus is on eradicating malnutrition by targeting the ultra-poor. Activities support the most vulnerable, in particular women (most of the 4 million female-headed households in Bangladesh belong to the ultra-poor category). In practice, a single, ultra-poor mother with several dependent children could receive temporary wage employment or cash support for basic household needs. With additional skills training and subsidised inputs, for example some goats or a sewing machine, she can engage in income generating activities and cover household financial needs for food and other essentials. Besides these social safety nets and social transfers, the European Commission also supports direct nutrition interventions (supplementary feeding, school feeding, nutritional surveillance) and improvements in productivity at small farm levels. At the policy level, the focus of support is upon decentralisation, policy formulation, dialogue and monitoring. To broaden its reach, and to consolidate local ownership, the EU collaborates with a wide range of partners - Government, local and international NGOs and other development partners.



Photo courtesy: DFID

The Economic Empowerment of the Poorest (EEP) programme is a £65 million fund channelling UK assistance to the NGO sector in Bangladesh, to lift a million people out of extreme poverty, and support the Government of Bangladesh in achieving its Millennium Development Goals 1 and 2 by 2015.

It disburses significant amounts of money through competitive grants for various types of projects. By channelling funds through NGOs, EEP provides a large economic stimulus to targeted communities, in turn strengthening local economies. The programme reduces vulnerability to natural disasters, economic shocks and social exclusion. It addresses the needs of extremely poor women, children, the elderly and ethnic minorities. In addition, it increases the knowledge base on experiences of extreme poverty in Bangladesh, through lessons learned, and raises awareness of extreme poverty in an international context.

The programme addresses the needs of beneficiaries who are amongst the poorest 10% of Bangladeshis, including those affected by chronic malnutrition; insecure employment; no shelter; landlessness; limited or no assets; little social or political capital; limited ability to withstand shocks; and with poor access to health, education and other basic services.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The tropical climate has made Bangladesh luxuriant in vegetation, with a diverse and extensive flora and fauna. The number of species of the country is not known precisely, but Bangladesh is estimated to have lost about 10% of its mammalian fauna, 3% of its avifauna and 4% of its reptiles during the last 100 years. 200 species of wildlife in the country are threatened with different degrees of risk of extinction, with the loss of species mostly associated with loss of habitat. For most endangered species, forests and wetlands are the last refuges. Even so, forest cover is under constant threat, being degraded and denuded by encroachment and faulty management practices, and the Wetlands are in an even worse condition, being converted into agricultural land and degraded in other ways.

The Government and the European Union join forces to better protect people and nature in the Sundarbans



Photo courtesy: EU Delegation

The European Unions institutions are supporting the Forest Department of the Ministry of Environment and Forests with a €10 million (900 million takas) grant programme in its efforts to protect and manage the Sundarbans Reserve Forest (SRF).

The project is also assisting communities living in areas adjacent to the Sundarbans to improve their livelihoods development and helping them to reduce their exposure to natural disasters. The target locations of the programme are the Sundarbans Reserve Forest and the communities of Bagerhat, Khulna, Satkhira, Pirojpur and Barguna.

6.7% of Bangladesh is made up of rivers and inland water, and nearly 50% of the country stands 10 meters above sea level. Key water environment issues include managing conflicts between agriculture and fisheries, protecting the remaining biodiversity, and limiting access to resources. The lack of adequate drainage, unplanned construction and poorly maintained embankments contribute to sedimentation in large rivers, raised river beds and reduced capacities of the rivers. Overflows flood the surrounding lands.

The largest impact of global warming will be felt in the water resources of Bangladesh. Many projections suggest greater variability in future monsoons, with severe impacts upon agriculture and other related sectors, due to excessive variations in water flows. Only a minority of the population use water-sealed and pit latrines. This is a basic cause of diarrhoea, and is a major health hazard in Bangladesh.

Until the 1970s, many Bangladeshis drank polluted water drawn from surface rivers. Shallow wells were then built throughout the country, to provide safe sources of drinking water. In the 1990s, however, many of these wells were shown to be contaminated by arsenic, a poison occurring naturally in Bangladesh's alluvial soils. Up to 25% of the country's 4 million wells were believed to be contaminated by arsenic. Water pollution from the use of commercial pesticides, especially of fishing areas, is also a concern, and falling water tables in the northern and central parts of the country cause intermittent water shortages.

Climate Change

In addition to being one of the world's most densely populated countries, Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to natural disasters. Floods and cyclones are especially recurring problems, and climate change will intensify Bangladesh's vulnerability to disasters. 2007 was a particularly bad year, with two periods of monsoon floods, plus a super-cyclone hitting the country, followed by another serious cyclone in 2009. These natural disasters caused extensive damage, with 9 million people being seriously affected, and their houses, food stocks and livelihoods damaged or destroyed along with their water, sanitation and health infrastructures.

“Unless the present trend of degradation of climate and environment is reversed, our next generations will have to face dire consequences for which we, as their ancestors, will never be forgiven.” - Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

Bangladesh is one of the most climate vulnerable countries in the world and it seriously threatens the country’s recent, significant achievements. It is essential that Bangladesh prepares to adapt to climate change and safeguard the future well-being of its people.

Climate Projections

Mean temperatures across Bangladesh are projected to increase by between 1.4°C and 2.4°C by 2050 and 2100, respectively, and this warming is expected to be more pronounced in the winter months (December-February). Consequently, the frequency of tropical cyclones in the Bay of Bengal may increase and, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s Third Assessment Report, there is evidence that peak intensity may increase by 5% to 10%, and precipitation rates may increase by 20% to 30%. Cyclone-induced storm surges are likely to worsen, with a potential rise in the sea level estimated at over 27 cm by 2050.

Bangladesh's vulnerability to climate change has also led to increased levels of development partner funding. To harmonise this increased funding, the Government published its ‘Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP)’ in September 2008, and allocated, from its own resources, Tk 3,000 million (€32 million) in 2008-09 and Tk 7,000 million (about €73 million) in 2010-11, to be used for supporting people in vulnerable areas, improving their quality of life and livelihoods, and their longer term capacities to manage climate-induced disasters. As a result of that, development partners pooled their funds into a multi-donor trust fund, to support the implementation of the BCCSAP for 2009-2018.

The ground-breaking ‘Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund’ was established on 31 May 2010, with a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and five development partners - the United Kingdom,

Denmark, Sweden, the European Union (collectively) and the World Bank. The Fund is managed and implemented by the Government, to improve food security, social protection and health; to address disaster management comprehensively; to build resilient infrastructures; to increase the country’s knowledge base; to mitigated carbon emissions and make development less dependent on carbon; and to build capacity and strengthen institutions.

“I read in the press that the interest for climate change has dropped in many developed countries. That is a pity, as we have not yet solved the problem. And people expect it of us. Ask the women out in a Bangladeshi village, those who constantly need to seek shelter from cyclones. Ask the Bangladeshi farmer whose crops were washed away by floods. Ask anyone who sees the change and faces the consequences. We owe it to them to find a solution.” - Ms. Connie Hedegaard, European Commissioner for Climate Action

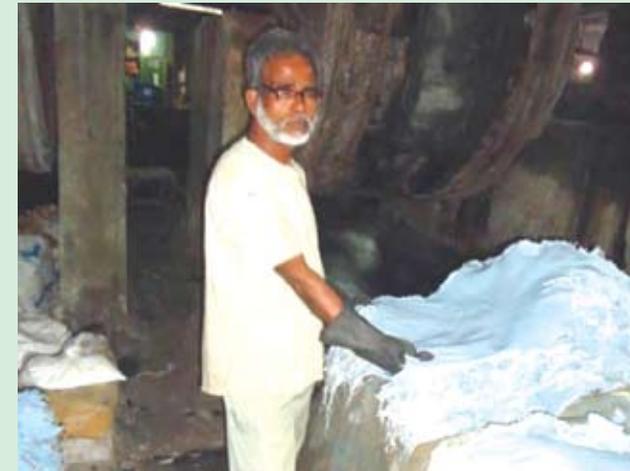
Pollution

Pollution issues are most acute in urban areas. Water Pollution is mostly concentrated in urban growth centres and industrial belts, and pollutants from municipal, industrial and agricultural waste enter the inland water system. The major causes of pollution are industrial effluents, agrochemicals, faecal pollution, spillage and low water flow in the dry season. Industrial pollution and deteriorating water quality are growing environmental concerns, with the main polluters from agro-based industries being sugar, pulp & paper, and tanneries. From non- renewable local resource-based industry, the major polluters are cement and fertilizer factories, and from imported resource-based industries, such as textiles, pharmaceuticals, plastic, petroleum/ refineries, and metal works, most are considered highly pollutant.

Among the waste produced by tanneries in Bangladesh, chemically contaminated wastewater and solid waste are by far the most hazardous for the environment and the population. A more efficient use of resources and significantly reduced pollution in the Bangladesh leather sector is possible, since fairly simple tools and methods have been developed, but they need to be used. The EU is providing support for

SMEs to be more environmentally friendly. Water consumption in the leather sector will be reduced by 30-40% through better water management; chrome content in waste water reduced by 60%; chemical oxygen demand reduced by 30%; and solar energy introduced for water heating.

More than 300 local managers, technicians and workers are being trained on how to use appropriate and cleaner technologies and effluent treatment, as well as appropriate chemical handling, safety measures and electrical installation.



‘I am Mohammad Mahtab Alom, 50 years old. I have been working in the wet-blue section of this tannery for 27 years. Due a skin disease my technician gave me boots and hand gloves. I always use them now. I also follow the new safety signs which are put into the different areas of the tannery, such as "Use Mask" or "Harmful"’.

With the high density of population, and continued inward migration of more people to cities, the task of managing solid waste has become a huge challenge for major urban centres. The problems have further increased as Dhaka has become a mega city, and solid waste from hospitals is a major concern for environmental quality in city areas.

Air pollution has deteriorated, but efforts for controlling air pollution need to be further supported by improved traffic management, higher technical standards for motor vehicles, and the expansion of public transport systems.

Even though Bangladesh has large proven gas reserves, over 90% of the population depend on biomass fuel, such as fuel wood, farm waste, cow dung, rice husk, leaves & twigs, and so on. It could be an environmentally friendly scenario if there were sustainable outputs of these biomass fuels.

Bangladesh has made significant progress in strengthening its disaster preparedness, and has built up an efficient disaster response mechanism. Continued efforts are, of course, still needed to reduce the negative impacts of disasters, both large and small, and to deal with them more effectively via greater emphasis, at local levels, on livelihood security and improved preparedness for local hazards. This will become ever more important as the effects of climate change increasingly bite.

Disability could not stop Mohammad Idris Ali

Mohammad Idris Ali (35) lost one of his hands in a road accident. After the accident, he became a fisherman. He also collected and sold wood from a nearby forest, while his wife Monju raised chickens and ducks and worked as a maid to supplement their income and support three children. They lived on leased land outside the embankment. In November 2007, Cyclone Sidr destroyed everything they had. Slowly, they tried to rebuild their small house and their lives, although Idris was unable to replace his boat or nets.

Then Idris received training on goat rearing, maintenance, and management from the Disaster-Preventive Coastal Area Rehabilitation Project, financed by the German Government. He obtained two female goats from the project, plus money for a goat shed and supplies. Several kids were born, so the family now has eight goats. Idris plans to expand his goat-rearing operations and sell five goats to buy a cow. The milk can then be sold to increase family earnings and improve his children's nutrition. With growing business success, Idris and Monju have begun to dream of a better future. They now send their older children to school.

In recent years, the Government has taken important steps to controlling pollution, protecting the environment, and encouraging environmentally-sound use of natural resources, via the National Environment Policy and formulation of a National Conservation Strategy and National Environment Management Action Plan.

Disaster Risk Reduction

EU assistance is not limited to humanitarian responses after disasters have struck. One of the major ongoing EU-funded programmes in the area of Disaster Risk Reduction is the 'Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP)' of the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management. CDMP, funded by the EU's institutions, Sweden, Norway and Ausaid, and which is implemented by UNDP, aims to further reduce Bangladesh's vulnerability to adverse natural hazards and extreme events, including climate change. The programme institutionalises risk reduction approaches, not just in its host Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, but more broadly across key ministries and agencies. CDMP harmonises development assistance across the field of Disaster Risk Reduction.

At the local level, CDMP empowers local communities through participatory Community Risk Assessments ultimately resulting in a Risk Reduction Action Plan, and is strengthening disaster management committees by engaging them in community level Disaster Risk Reduction initiatives. Several committees and NGOs have been granted contracts for implementing priority micro project type interventions, such as construction of culverts, access roads to cyclone/flood shelters, drains to reduce the risk of water logging, flood shelters for livestock and persons, raising of plinth heights above flood level, and installation of deep tube wells.

Relevant MDG (source: UNDP Bangladesh)

MDG 7 - Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Key: → = On Track ↑ = Will be achieved by 2015/already achieved ↓ = Not achievable by 2015				
Indicator	Base Years	Latest Estimates	Target for 2015	Remark
7.1 % Land Area covered by forest (tree cover)	9.0%	19.2%	20%	Needs attention
7.2 CO2 emissions (metric tonnes per capita)	0.14	0.30		→
7.3 Consumption ozone-depleting CFCs (tonnes)	195.0	127.9	0	→
7.4 % Fish stocks within safe biological limits.	%54	%16 inland: 16% marine	%	Needs attention
7.5 % Total water resources used	%	6.6%	%	Needs attention
7.6 % Terrestrial & Marine areas protected	1.6%	1.8%	5.0%	Needs attention
7.7 Species threatened with extinction		201 inland: 18 marine		Needs attention
7.8% People using improved water drinking source	78%	86%	89%	→
7.9 % People using improved sanitation facility	39%	54%	70%	Needs attention
7.10 %Urban population living in slums		7.8%		Insufficient data

EU Environmental Sustainability Sector Donors	EU Sector Disbursements in € million			
	2009	2010	2011	Totals
Netherlands	12.4	7.9	10.7	€ 31.0 million
UK	3.3	11.2	7.5	€ 22.0 million
Spain	0.5		21.2	€ 21.7 million
European Union	7.7	6.7	3.8	€ 18.2 million
Sweden	4.8	8.4	1.3	€ 14.5 million
Germany	0.9	2.1	4.1	€ 7.1 million
Denmark	1.1	1.2	0.4	€ 2.7 million
Totals	€ 30.7 million	€ 37.5 million	€ 49.0 million	€ 117.2 million

WATER & SANITATION

WATER & SANITATION

Bangladesh faces huge challenges in Water Management, including climate change adaptation; the need for a Delta Vision for the long term; providing protection against storm surges along the coast; preventing floods in cities; and ensuring sustainable water supplies as groundwater is depleted, as arsenic contamination exists, and as saline water intrudes along the coast.

Annual floods inundate up to 60% of the country, and cyclones Sidr, in 2007, and Aila in 2009, demonstrated the country's fragility. Frequent floods in cities, plus heavily polluted surface water, underscore the need for measures to promote sustainability. 60% of the country's rice is produced during the dry season, mainly using groundwater. This leads to competing water claims. Over-exploiting the groundwater has led to declining groundwater levels, nationally, and arsenic contamination. That has created additional risks for drinking water supplies. In tidal coastal areas, water management must dramatically improve, to increase the productive potential in an area which is home to many of Bangladesh's extremely poor.

Bangladesh's 380 rivers are important in the life of every Bangladeshi, particularly given the dynamics of the main rivers: the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna. For example, the mouth of the Gorai River has silted up, and this has deprived the Sundurbans of an important fresh water source, putting this World Heritage mangrove forest at risk.

Bangladesh's sanitation coverage is 54% (not including 27% coverage provided via shared latrines), and 86% of Bangladeshis have access to drinking water. The two main challenges facing the Government are accessing the difficult-to-reach hard core poor, plus finding technical solutions to combat high arsenic content, salination, falling groundwater levels and pollution in areas with high, unsanitary groundwater levels. About 8% of the population live in urban slums, without proper water supply and sanitation facilities. Unplanned development has led to inadequate drainage and regular flooding. Parts of Dhaka are frequently inaccessible during the rainy season. Waste water treatment is obligatory by law, but the law is not always followed, and industrial and household waste water are usually disposed of without

treatment, leading to more surface water pollution. A solution for water supply in cities can be through the use of piped water systems, instead of groundwater. Using surface water requires more effluent treatment.

The Netherlands and the Garment Industry reduce hazardous discharges

The Netherlands, together with the private sector, government and civil society, assists Bangladesh in finding and developing ideas and innovative technologies for the water sector, and particularly for drinking water supply, sanitation and waste water management. The Netherlands is helping textile factories in Bangladesh with the introduction of clean production mechanisms and treatment of waste water. As an engine for economic growth through its exports to Europe and emerging markets, the Netherlands supports the Bangladesh garment industry to become more sustainable and globally competitive. Cleaner production practices and technologies significantly reduce water consumption and effluents, making the sector more resource-efficient and more competitive.

The industry directly benefits by savings arising from reduced water consumption. Also, workers in these factories, mostly women, benefit from improvements in occupational health, safety and other improvements to working conditions. The key priorities of the Netherlands initiative include substitution of hazardous chemicals, and working towards zero discharge, improved energy efficiency and reduced carbon emissions. These improvements also positively impact the communities surrounding the factories, as well as contributing to a cleaner environment, generally.

The policy framework for the water sector is based mainly on the National Water Policy of 1999, which is well developed but not implemented effectively. The main constraint arises from the functioning of the public water institutions, where capacity building is vital. Bangladesh has internationally-recognised water institutions – the Institute of Water Modelling (IWM) and Centre for Environmental and Geographic Information Services (CEGIS) are capable of in depth analysis and are interested in developing sustainable solutions. Also, community participation in combined water management and crop production programmes has been effective, with crop production increasing by up to 35% in polders where this approach was tested.

The Netherlands Water Programme (2011-2015), involving 26 Dutch Water Boards, focuses on sustainable and participatory water management in existing polders and in reclaiming land in the coastal zone; improved river management; improved drinking water and sanitation in both rural and urban areas; and institutional strengthening.

Netherlands financial support provided to BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) for improving water supply and sanitation in rural areas has been very successful. About 17.5 million extra people now use proper sanitary facilities and 0.5 million people have been connected to a water source, since 2005. In addition, a new agreement has been signed with BRAC to provide access to water and sanitation services for the hard-core poor in difficult-to-reach rural areas.

From a technical point of view, other priority areas for the water sector are in developing sustainable solutions for river erosion and sedimentation, inland water transport and river training, treatment of water, protection against flooding by river and sea water, and effective use of water for the productive sectors. Using rivers for inland transport has high potential in the light of poor road infrastructures.

A Bangladesh Delta Plan

The Prime Minister's statement that a Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 is required provides strong political signals in support of bilateral cooperation, and Dutch experience has been requested to elaborate this Plan. The Bangladesh-Netherlands 'Water Mondiaal' Programme is therefore jointly developing a long-term Delta Plan for Bangladesh, based upon sustainable and climate-proof water management. The Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 will provide a more integrated vision on water management for the longer term, and will be an umbrella for shorter term projects and plans. The Delta Plan will be launched in 2012. A River and a Groundwater Master Plan is also under development.

More attention is also required in water management to support the agriculture sector, in order to intensify cropping patterns and increase yields.

Denmark has been supporting the Water Supply and Sanitation sector in Bangladesh for over 20 years. Its support contributes to poverty reduction, through improved access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Danish assistance operates on the basis of sector-wide support for water and sanitation delivery. Such an approach encourages full Government ownership and accountability for service delivery in partnership with NGOs and the private sector. Denmark assisted the Government of Bangladesh to prepare a Sector Development Framework (SDF) through sector-wide consultations, and future programmes in water supply and sanitation sector have now been formulated on the basis of this SDF.

For many years, Denmark has supported implementation of piped water supply schemes, hand pumps and other technologies in rural areas, pourashavas and municipalities. Significant improvements in hygiene behaviour and practices have also been made through support to many local partner NGOs.



In November 2011, the Government of Bangladesh launched the new medium and long-term Water Supply and Sanitation Development Plan, which outlines key challenges and investment needs of the sector until 2025. Denmark provides assistance to the Hygiene, Sanitation and Water Fund (HYSAWA), which provides direct financial and technical support to local governments for implementation of water supply and sanitation activities.

How a slum community in Bangladesh improved its access to clean water and sanitation.

Ranu Begum understands the importance of clean water and hygiene. She lives in Zakir's slum in Dhaka. With support from the UK, she has helped to dramatically improve the health of her community and achieved a change in the local government's water policy.



Ranu Begum prepares food for her family with clean water.

Picture: Charlie Bibby/FT courtesy of WaterAid

'When I came here in 2002,' she says, 'there were 2,000 families and only one water point. So, because we were women, we had to collect water at night, and there was a long queue, too. During the day, men and boys pushed us out of the way. Every day, neighbours went to the hospital about cholera. Families suffered from jaundice fever and diarrhoea. The water was dirty because we had hanging latrines. The whole slum was a hanging slum, above water, and flies were everywhere. Then, in 2005, we heard that DSK was working in latrines and water, and asked how we could get rid of the hanging latrines and all the diseases everywhere.'

Ranu is the President of a the Zakir Bostw community-based organisation, formed with help from the NGO, DSK. They found that, for 1,500 people, there were just 14 water connections (12 of which were illegal) and 36 hanging latrines.

After DSK helped them, there were no hanging latrines, and all had access to legal water connections, communal latrine blocks and three rubbish collection points. ‘Now, we don’t go to the cholera hospital,’ explains Ranu. ‘Before, our clothes were dirty, because of lack of water. I never knew that washing hands before eating was so important. We have children’s and adolescent girls’ groups to improve hygiene, too.’



*Children washing their hands in clean water.
Picture: Charlie Bibby/FT courtesy of WaterAid*

‘Now we can always get water for our cooking in the day, so we can eat on time and our children can go to school on time’, says Ranu, with a smile. ‘We can wash our children every day. At most, we wait two to three minutes for water. The time we spent collecting water we now use to earn money and other things. The water points are ours, legally, and we pay 1,360 taka per month, per pump. Each pump is for about 20 households. Some households are charged 50 taka per month, some 30, some 20 and some, like beggars, aren’t charged. Every household can take as much water as it needs. With the money we collect, we employ a night guard. We also collect 10 taka per household for rubbish collection and pay a driver to collect the rubbish and take it away at night.’



Purnima lives on the coast, in Khulna. Here, the water in the upper groundwater reservoirs is undrinkable, from salt water intrusion and arsenic contamination. It demanded a permanent solution, to be simple and cost-effective and easily maintained locally. Such a solution was supported by the HYSAWA Fund, financed partly by Denmark.

Previously, each trip to the nearest water pump took Purnima half an hour. With the amount of water needed in her household, it was both time-consuming and hard work. It was half an hour’s walk and pumping and carrying the water was hard work. The water was also contaminated with arsenic, and it was salty. In spring 2011, a new, piped water supply system was installed in Sachibunia, her home. It treats the water and pumps it directly into the newly-installed distribution system. The water is now clean and conveniently close to Sachibunia’s home and to other households in the village. Life has improved a lot in the village since then.

EU Water & Sanitation Sector Donors	EU Sector Disbursements in € million			
	2009	2010	2011	Totals
Netherlands	17.6	17.7	15.0	€ 50.3 million
Denmark	8.5	7.7	9.8	€ 26.0 million
UK	5.9	7.8	10.8	€ 24.5 million
Totals	€ 32.0 million	€ 33.2 million	€ 35.6 million	€100.8 million

GENDER EQUALITY

GENDER EQUALITY

Women are the most frequent victims of crime in Bangladesh, including from widespread domestic violence and human trafficking. Violence against women is a major cause of suffering and is linked to poverty. It occurs both domestically and at work, but remains largely under-reported and un-investigated. According to a 2009 survey in Mymensingh, Bogra, Madaripur and Thakurgaon, 85% of women do not feel safe outside their homes, fearing rape, attack, robbery, harassment and accident. Many do not feel safe inside their homes, either. 49% of married women report physical violence by their husbands. Half the women surveyed in 2009 stated they did not trust the police, and only 1% of women who were victims of domestic violence approached the police. The Bangladesh Police Force is trying to change this by introducing gender responsive community-based policing, but building bridges between police and communities, particularly between police and women, is a difficult and slow process. Women and children are also the main victims of natural disasters, which worsen their risk of becoming landless, displaced, and crime victims.

Bangladesh has moved steadily forward to legally guarantee equal rights for women, and to try to protect them from discrimination and violence. Not only does the Constitution of Bangladesh prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and promote equality of opportunity for women to participate in politics, public employment and public life, but Bangladesh is party to a series of international commitments to promote gender equality and eliminate violence against women. In practice, however, it has been very difficult to implement these commitments in full, and they have not always been translated into national legislation. There is widespread ignorance of the law, and significant resistance to implementation of gender equality in the courts, the law enforcement agencies and in society at large.

Gender-based violence therefore remains prevalent, but reporting and discussion of violence is now more acceptable, as a consequence of tough new laws against such crimes, including against human trafficking. Early marriage, dowries, and acid attacks are other forms of violence against women. Human trafficking, particularly of women and children, is of grave concern, as is

harassment of school-goers. Parliament approved the Domestic Violence (Resistance and Protection) Bill in 2010, and the Government confirmed its commitment to combating human trafficking in South Asia by signing the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution.

Spain funds a programme implemented by the ILO, which contributes to implementing Government policies to prevent violence against women and to protect victims in Bangladesh. This includes capacity building in the Government, addressing violence against women, improving access to information related to gender and violence, and providing support to NGOs and civil society. It also addresses the attitudes and behaviours of men, women, boys and girls. Activities undertaken by the programme include awareness-raising, sensitisation, networking, and developing capacities of 'gatekeepers' and stakeholders. To protect and help victims of gender-based violence, the project provides women with immediate care, relief and rehabilitation through a comprehensive package, including expanding, renovating and improving the existing shelter system. The project strengthens awareness about violence against women in the workplace and how to create safe, decent working conditions for women.

Recently, progress has accelerated, and Bangladesh has made impressive gains in gender equality, notably in health and education. The country nearly halved its fertility rates from 1990 to 2009, closed the gender gap in infant mortality, and has rapidly improved overall child mortality rates. The garment industry mostly employs young women (more than 2 million), and expanded access to microcredit has empowered women and improved livelihoods. Many women now serve on local government councils. Programmes to develop infrastructure, agriculture, and services have created wage and self-employment opportunities for women, and women are now joining the migrant labour force and contributing to the economy through remittances. But, despite the increase in the number of women in the paid workforce, their participation rate is only half that of men, and male-female differences in wages are significant. Whilst there are positive changes in social attitudes, however, women continue to suffer gender gaps linked to social discrimination.

Bangladesh has made major strides in closing the gender gap in enrolment in primary and secondary school, with girls now outnumbering boys. However, large numbers remain out of school and attendance is poor, particularly for girls. There are also major concerns about quality of education. On tests of knowledge and skills, girls do worse than boys, and suffer higher dropout rates and lower completion rates in secondary education. Sexual harassment in schools and role stereotyping in texts and teaching practices impede effective gender-neutral learning. However, this is being countered, to some extent, by a significant increase in women teachers in primary schools.

Access to primary health care, including ante- and postnatal care, has been expanded, and inequality in infant mortality has been reversed, with infant mortality now higher for boys than girls. Females have a life expectancy of 68.7 years, whilst that of males is 66.1 years. The contraceptive prevalence rate also rose from 9.6% in 1975 to 56.1% in 2009. Yet, despite these achievements, maternal mortality remains unacceptably high. Only 15% of pregnant women give birth in medical institutions, and a large proportion is malnourished during pregnancy and lactation. The maternal mortality rate is falling, but still remains high. The risk of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases is worsening, and is almost double that of men.

Child brides are often withdrawn from school and are at risk of violence, coerced sex, dying in pregnancy and childbirth, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Girls aged ten to 15 are five times more likely than women aged 20 to 24 to die in pregnancy and childbirth. The Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB) is working in madrasa schools across Bangladesh, which offer an Islamic-focused education to poor young people. The FPAB analysed Islamic teachings and demonstrated how Islamic teachings oppose dowry and child marriage, and support gender equality for access to education, health care, and economic resources. Through the FPAB's intensive and sustained advocacy, they secured the support of madrasa authorities for education and reproductive health services inside the madrassas and the wider community. Islamic leaders now use their authority to promote women's rights within Islam.

In Bangladesh, with support from the UK, the FPAB averted 96,000 unintended pregnancies among young women. The UK also supports work to help empower women and girls to choose whether, when and how many children to have, and ensure pregnancy and child birth are safe.

'I am a girl with a choice,' says Hosna, 14, whose father was planning to marry her off. With help from a UK funded project she had a counsellor she could confide in, at her school.

'By talking with the counsellor, my teacher and the Imam, my family agreed to meet FPAB to discuss the suffering I might face during pregnancy, and the illegal child marriage I would suffer.' Her proposed marriage was put aside, and she still attends school.



The majority, however, are like Hosna's friend, Salma, who was married when she was 14. 'Her baby died as soon as it was born. Salma bled a lot during the birth and she is very weak now.'

Bangladesh has elected female heads of government, and the current cabinet has several women heading ministries. The share of women in Parliament rose beyond the required 15% quota in 2008 through party nominations. Women's participation in local decision making has also improved because of the 24% quota set for women in local government institutions, but women occupy few senior decision-making positions.

Shefali Rani, from Gopalganj in central Bangladesh, cannot believe the transformation she has undergone in the last few years. The change did not come about easily, though. Shortly after Shefali married Babul, his family demanded a dowry. Shefali's father, who often struggled to earn enough for food, managed to provide a bit of money to Babul, but demands for more continued. As is often the case in dowry-related disputes, Babul beat

his wife to persuade her to put more pressure on her family. The violence occurred every day, and Babul's mother also joined in.



Fortunately, at this stage Shefali's plight became known to a local charity supported financially by the UK. The charity, Jagorani Sangshta, is a partner of Manusher Jonno Foundation, an organisation supporting human rights in Bangladesh. With help from the charity, the dispute between Shefali and Babul was settled, and the violence stopped. But the story didn't end there, for Shefali.

After taking up the charity's offer of training on domestic violence issues, Shefali became involved in a local 'vigilance team' which looks out for warning signs of abuse in the community. She also started discussing domestic violence with her relatives, neighbours and people from nearby villages. Soon, Shefali became known in the area for her campaigning, and her neighbours encouraged her to stand as a candidate in the local elections.

'I didn't think I would win, but decided to honour their demand, and I stood for election. And, as you see, I won,' says Shefali, who is now a member of the local council. Shefali is a popular and trusted voice in the village, taking part in local mediations and arbitrations at the village court. "I always try to support the female victims of torture, so they get an even-handed judgment," she says.

The Government's strategy for fostering gender equality mainstreams its support in each sector. Gender considerations have also been mainstreamed in the development programmes of the second National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction and the Sixth Five-Year Plan, which identified barriers to women's advancement. Policies on agriculture, food, labour, and industry increasingly refer to women's involvement and rights. The commitment to increased women's participation in public decision-making is reflected in legal provisions which ensure minimum percentages in both national and local governments.

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs coordinates and monitors the gender-related activities of ministries through designated focal points, but its capacity to monitor and guide other ministries requires strengthening.

WORDS OF HOPE

When The England Cricket Team paid a visit to a hospital in Dhaka, they turned a spotlight on one of Bangladesh's most shocking crimes. At the Acid Survivors Foundation hospital, the team saw the consequences of acid-throwing, a crime predominantly targeted at women. Bangladesh has a troubling history of acid-throwing, with attacks triggered by anything from dowry-related disputes to squabbles over land. Victims suffer serious burns, leading to lifelong scarring and disfigurement. Expensive reconstructive surgery may be required – which the Acid Survivors Foundation is able to provide partly as a result of support from the UK.

For Haina, an Open University student who was attacked by her neighbour after an argument, the team's visit goes some way towards raising awareness of acid-related violence. Cricket is hugely popular throughout Bangladesh, and Haina feels that well-known faces could be instrumental in laying the ground for a countrywide stand on the issue. Visits like this also provide an immediate morale boost to survivors. "When people of this stature come, talk to us, share our stories and give us words of hope, we feel that we are not forgotten," says Haina.

The cricket team also met five-year-old Durjoy, who was fed acid by his aunt and uncle in an attempt to gain a property inheritance for their own children. Durjoy suffered dreadful burns to his mouth and internal organs, requiring many delicate operations to enable him to eat and speak.



Acid burns create isolation in all individuals. No matter how determined the victims, they need to know that, despite their scars, they are able to lead a normal life. The ASF has treated some 2,500 victims since 1999, a quarter of whom are children. Recently, the incidence of attacks has declined significantly, from approx. 500 in 2002 to 150 in 2009.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

In Jessore, Bangladesh, 25-year-old Asma Begum is worried about the state of her cabbages. 'The moths attack them, eating into the core of the vegetable and destroying the crop. They leave a stinking smell,' she says. For women like Asma, vegetable patches provide a vital source of nutrition and income, and a bit of know-how can mean the difference between a failed and a healthy crop.

Fortunately, help is at hand in the form of Nargis and Alimun, the local 'laptop ladies'. Every week, as part of a UK-backed scheme, the pair drop by, to offer advice about a range of issues. Asma knows they have plenty of information about crop diseases, including tips on how to fight them. 'We go from village to village and usually cover 10 to 15 households every day,' says Nargis. Currently they serve around 1,000 households, answering the questions mainly of impoverished women.



Most of the questions Nargis and Alimun receive are about health. 'Rural women often don't get the chance to get out of their household duties to go to a doctor,' says Alimun. The answers to their queries can usually be found in the laptops' sizeable information banks. In addition to advice on everyday health issues and agriculture, the laptops cover topics such as education, law, disaster management and rural employment.

In rural Bangladesh, where traditions are often rigid, the arrival of technology has transformed gender relations. With huge amounts of information at their fingertips, women can play more decisive roles in their communities and are more confident about their personal abilities. As the two "laptop ladies" like to remind the women they help: "Knowledge is power".

Relevant MDG (source: UNDP Bangladesh)

MDG 3 – Promote Gender Equality & Empower Women

Key: → = On Track ↑ = Will be achieved by 2015/already achieved ↓ = Not achievable by 2015				
Indicator	Base Years	Latest Estimates	Target for 2015	Remark
3.1a Ratio of girls to boys in primary education (Gender Parity Index=Girls/Boys)	0.83	1.01	1.0	→
3.1b Ratio of girls to boys in secondary education (Gender Parity Index=Girls/Boys)	0.52	1.20	1.0	→
3.1c Ratio of girls to boys in tertiary education (Gender Parity Index=Girls/Boys)	0.37	0.32	1.0	↓
3.2 % Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	19.1%	24.6%	50%	↓
3.3 % seats held by women in national parliament	12.7%	19.0%	33%	↓

EU Gender Equality Sector Donors	EU Sector Disbursements in € million			
	2009	2010	2011	Totals
UK	6.7	7.6	6.3	€ 20.6 million
Spain	2.7	2.1	14.4	€ 19.2 million
European Union	0.3	1.6	2.2	€ 4.1 million
Germany	0.6	1.0	0.6	€ 2.2 million
Netherlands	0.9	0.4	0.9	€ 2.2 million
Sweden	0.5	0.9	0.7	€ 2.1 million
Totals	€ 11.7 million	€ 13.6 million	€ 25.1 million	€ 50.4 million

ENERGY & INFRASTRUCTURE

ENERGY & INFRASTRUCTURE

Energy

For several years, the Government of Bangladesh has been working on institutional strengthening of the energy sector and in improving its respective policies, in order to provide more energy to the people as well as to accelerate economic growth, social development and reduce poverty.

However, reliable electricity supply in Bangladesh is still uncertain. Less than half the population has regular access to electricity. The available capacity of the country's power plants has fallen far short of demand, and reliable supplies require improvement. Consequently, there are frequent and long power cuts affecting the population's quality of life, and productivity and competitiveness in trade and industry. According to the World Bank, annual GDP growth in Bangladesh could be up to 2% higher, annually, if power supplies were sufficient.

Primary Energy Sources (2010)	Electricity Generation (2011)	Electricity Demand (2010)	Electricity Supply (2010)	Access to Electricity Grid (2010)
Natural Gas 43%	Natural Gas 76%	6,000 MW	4,000 –	48.5%
Biomass 41%	Oil 17%	(during	4,600	(approx 15
Oil 10%	Water 3%	peak load	MW (during	million
Coal 6%	Coal 4%	periods)	peak load	households)
			periods)	

German Development Cooperation is supporting the country's efforts to increase energy efficiency, through reduction of transmission and distribution losses, and energy efficient technologies in industries and households. This includes the introduction and rolling out of prepayment electricity meters, rehabilitation of key power plants and construction of transmission lines, in addition to the support to institutional restructuring in the energy sector and the promotion of renewable energy sources. Over the last few years, the sector has been gradually decentralised, a step which has brought steady increases in efficiency.

However, almost all medium and large factories in the country are forced to install captive or standby generation facilities (gas or diesel engines) to avoid interruptions which would leave workers idle for hours on end, or cause entire runs to be discarded. Micro and small enterprises simply close at dusk. Children cannot study in the evenings, and medical facilities cannot refrigerate medications or vaccines.

In rural areas, where more than 70% of the population have no access to electricity, kerosene lamps are used for lighting, and cow dung, wood and agricultural waste are used for cooking. Only 6% of the entire population have access to natural gas, and they are concentrated in urban areas. Smoke and particles from traditional cooking stoves and kerosene lamps cause eye problems and respiratory diseases. The World Health Organisation has estimated that 46,000 women and children die each year in Bangladesh as a result of exposure to indoor air pollution, whilst millions more suffer respiratory problems, tuberculosis, asthma, cardiovascular disease, eye problems and lung cancer.

The Ministry of Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources, supported by the German Government, is helping to reduce consumption of biomass and fossil fuels, as well as carbon dioxide emissions, by propagating modern forms of renewable energy, such as solar energy, biogas digesters, energy-saving cooking stoves, and rice parboiling systems. They are helping industry, public sector power utilities, and private households to increase their use of energy-efficient appliances and production processes – ‘to do more with less.’

According to the Government, in order to sustain an economic growth of 6-7% per annum, a rise in power supply of up to 36,000 MW until 2030 is necessary, which would require annual investments of US\$3.5 billion. The application of appropriate technologies, especially in rural areas, is therefore essential as is working for energy saving and energy efficiency improvements.

REDUCING LOAD SHEDDING

In Dhaka, alone, evening load shedding ranges from 175 to 250 MW, which translates to about 4.2 million incandescent light bulbs of average 60W power! Urban Dhaka has about 2 million households who use about 5 million of those bulbs. If the bulbs were replaced with 23W compact fluorescent lamps, which also give good quality light but consume only 40% of incandescent bulbs' energy, the evening load for Dhaka would drop by 155 MW.

A Dhaka Power Distribution Company project, supported by Germany, has replaced around 30,000 incandescent lamps with high quality compact fluorescent lamps in about 10,000 households in Rajarbag, Dhaka, and has also replaced about 15,000 magnetic ballasts with electronic ballasts, saving around 25-30% of energy over the life cycle of the tube lamps. The German Government and World Bank have scaled up this programme and replaced 10.5 million incandescent bulbs in 10 cities and districts.

The use of renewable energies is a high priority for the Government of Bangladesh, especially in rural areas which are not connected to the national power grid.

Bondhu Chula: Cooking safely and saving money

Burning cow dung, jute sticks, or wood in inefficient and poorly-ventilated clay stoves produces smoke, carbon monoxide, and carcinogens that seriously threaten family health. Besides, such materials are increasingly scarce and costly, and put extra pressure on poor households' budgets. The Sustainable Energy for Development programme, supported by the German Government, has been working on improved cooking stoves, known throughout the country as Bondhu Chula. They burn more efficiently, and draw off smoke and toxins, creating a safer environment for women and children.



“This *Chula* helps us to save a huge amount of wood fuel and money,” reports Kumkun, one *Bondhu Chula* user in Munshigonj District. She added that the family is saving money, not only because she now needs less wood fuel, but also because the family no longer has to pay for respiratory treatment for her sister-in-law, who was regularly sick from using a conventional stove. “My sister-in-law has never been sick again, and we can now use the money we save for the other needs our family has.”

Let there be light

Because of a programme supported jointly by the German Government and other donors, life in Ramchandrapur, a small town 80 kilometres north of the capital Dhaka, has changed recently. Clean electricity from solar home systems lights up places which were poorly lit by kerosene lamps. Shops remain open longer, and locals do their homework in the evenings, listen to the radio or make income-earning handicrafts. Community health centres can refrigerate their medicines and vaccinations.

Ameena's family no longer uses kerosene lamps to illuminate the two rooms of their small house. The old lamps caused eye irritations and breathing problems for family members. Now that she has access to bright and safe electricity, her daughters can read and write in the evenings, and the family can run small electrical appliances. The cost of the solar home system was about €300. To purchase it, Ameena and her husband received credit from the Rural Service Foundation (RSF).



Through solar home systems, people in rural areas can be supplied with electricity in a fast, simple and environmental friendly way. Since 2002, over 1.3 million systems have been installed in off-grid areas of Bangladesh, and supply almost 7,000,000 people with electricity. This number is growing.

The programme subsidises investment costs for solar home systems and provides funds for microcredit. Through the state-owned "Infrastructure Development Company Ltd" (IDCOL), money reaches local partner organisations, such as RSF, which sell and install the solar home systems for the customers. They also maintain and service the systems for the first three years, and train the owners. This ensures that Ameena's family will not have to use those kerosene lamps again, and her daughters can still do their homework.

Solar energy may be the easiest way to provide electricity to rural Bangladesh, but the country's reliance upon biomass for fuel will nevertheless continue for several decades to come. A programme supported by the German Government works with many local partners, therefore, to promote the industrial and commercial uses of biogas technology throughout Bangladesh, since biogas digesters provide a simple, comparatively inexpensive and highly effective way to more efficiently use and conserve biomass. Over 1,000 biogas plants have already been installed in

slaughterhouses, dairy farms, and poultry farms. More than 50 biogas plants using human waste have been installed in hostels, madrassas, schools and police dormitories. Another industry, the rice milling industry, makes widespread use of biomass (rice husk), employing over 50,000 steam generating furnaces for parboiling 90% of Bangladesh's rice harvest in their mills. Not only do these rice parboilers burn over half Bangladesh's most plentiful source of biomass - rice husks - they are also dangerous for onlookers and operators. A new rice parboiling system, supported by Germany, is being replicated across the country. It reduces the use of rice husks by over 50%, and prevents explosions, thus significantly reducing risks for operators.

Infrastructure

Public investment in rural roads enables households to increase opportunities for themselves through easier contact with markets and the rest of the country. Most of the population still lives in rural areas, and most are directly engaged in farming or related activities. Bangladesh's food self-sufficiency, today, is primarily thanks to the introduction of new varieties of grains, the improvement of farming techniques, and a network of rural roads and markets, which allow increased food production to be marketed more easily. Road investment is a major expense for public investment in rural areas, and this confirms that rural income and productivity growth depend critically on such investments. Studies show that rural road investments reduce poverty significantly, through higher agricultural production, higher wages, lower input and transportation costs, and higher output prices. Rural roads also lead to higher girls' and boys' schooling. What is more, road investments are pro-poor, with gains being proportionately higher for the poor than for the non-poor.

In Bangladesh, the agency which builds the roads and markets is the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development, & Cooperatives (MLGRDC). Former Chief Engineer Quamrul Islam Siddique, who headed up the agency in its various forms for 20 years, saw clearly that sustainable rural development

required roads providing year-round access to rural centres, markets, schools, health centres, and local government services, as well as jobs in the construction and maintenance of this infrastructure.

As well as transport cost savings, roads have short- and long-term effects on employment, incomes and productivity, plus they lead to investments directly benefitting children. Household effects include both direct and indirect effects. A World Bank study in Bangladesh suggests that the savings for household transport expenses are substantial, averaging about 36-38%. Road improvement also has a significant impact on men's agricultural wages (increasing them by 27% in some cases), fertiliser prices (falls of about 5% in some areas) and aggregate crop indices (prices at the farm gate increase by about 4%, while output rises significantly by about 38%). The effects of rural road investment are also substantial for employment and for the schooling of both boys and girls. In fact, the overall effects of road improvement on household annual consumption per head in the rural areas of Bangladesh have been 11% in some rural areas, benefitting the poor disproportionately. Overall poverty reduction, due to rural road improvements, was found to be about 5%.

The German Government has consistently supported this sector for over 25 years, developing programmes with LGED to improve the quality of infrastructure and sustainable livelihoods for rural people. In 2004, German Development Cooperation joined with the Asian Development Bank in an effort to scale-up the support to this sector. LGED's Rural Infrastructure Improvement Projects I & II (RIIP I & II), have contributed by constructing and upgrading roads, building bridges and culverts, planting trees along roads, improving growth centres, rural markets, boat landing sites, and constructing flood shelters, submersible roads, and union parishad complexes. Germany has supported LGED efforts to implement sustainable management and maintenance systems for upgraded roads, markets and boat landing sites; promote road safety; and improve local governance at the union parishad level, through capacity development of officials and market management committees. Public participation has been promoted,

especially the participation of women at all levels, including in the designation of some sections of upgraded rural markets for female shop owners exclusively.

The first phase of the support was a joint effort of LGED, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and German development cooperation in 16 districts in Barisal, and Khulna. The second phase began in 2006 and is working in 23 districts of the Dhaka, Rajshahi, and Chittagong divisions, with collaboration between LGED, ADB, Germany (€21.6 million), and the UK (€1.6 million). The programmes will have generated around 92,800 person-years of employment during the construction period and provided direct employment and income-generating opportunities to 9,500 poor women, while the improved roads will benefit an estimated 24 million people, 50% of whom live below the poverty line.

Decentralised participatory planning is one of the central characteristics of the Government/donor collaboration, and is key to its success. For example, a team went to 99 upazilas involved in the project and held meetings, in which local people, including doctors, teachers, farmers, rickshaw pullers, and local officials (of whom, 18% were women) decided which roads, markets, boat landing sites, and union parishad complexes were to be improved.

One adviser during the first phase said, 'Although upazila engineers and staff had pre-selected roads and markets in the project preparation phase, the local participatory meeting had the final say and in many cases actually overruled the initial selections, or adjusted them, for example adding another four kilometres of road so that another market would be connected.'

Local contractors were selected to build the chosen roads and improve the markets, and workshops were held to motivate the awarded contractors to hire women and pay them the same wages as men, with the result that by September 2008, the percentage of women employed by these contractors was 19% in Barisal and 25% in Khulna.

However, road construction and market improvement alone are ineffective if the roads are not properly maintained, so the Government's maintenance budget has risen steadily to around five billion taka a year today. Actual road pavement maintenance is carried out by LGED's mobile maintenance teams, based at the district level, while the shoulders and slopes are maintained by so-called Labour Contracting Societies (LCSs), groups of destitute women recruited in the local communities, paid by LGED. These women shape the shoulder gradient and maintain the slope to ensure proper drainage. They also plant trees along the roads, care for those trees, control the vegetation along the shoulder, and fill in holes, whilst a training system is tailored to the learning needs and capacities of these women.

These projects have revealed sizeable positive impacts. Motorised traffic on improved roads increased by 140%, while non-motorised traffic rose by 57%. Travel time, depending upon the type of transport, was 38% to 224% lower

per km. Transport fares were 35% to 85% lower, and many shops opened along the roads, providing jobs and incomes to people. Visits by health assistants increased by 50%, while the food sufficiency status of households improved considerably, with 69% of households reporting 12-month food sufficiency, against an initial 38.7% in the baseline. Clearly, this makes direct contributions to achieving several Millennium Development Goals, including the eradication of extreme poverty, universal primary education, gender equality, and reduction in child mortality.

A third phase, with co-financing from Germany and the Asian Development Bank, is about to start in 2012. RIIP III focuses upon rural infrastructure, considering climate change risks and challenges, as well as improved local administration, improved access to social facilities and strengthened participation of women in decision-making processes. RIIP III activities will be developed in 21 districts in Khulna, Rajshahi and Rangpur Division.

EU Energy & Infrastructure Sector Donors	EU Sector Disbursements in € million			
	2009	2010	2011	Totals
Germany	11.0	21.1	16.0	€ 48.1 million
Totals	€ 11.0 million	€21.1 million	€16.0 million	€ 48.1 million

URBAN

URBAN

Bangladesh has one of the fastest rates of urban population growth in the world. Dhaka, with about 14 million people, is now one of the 10 largest cities in the world. Its slum population has doubled in the last decade, from 1.5 to 3.4 million people, and 53.2% of the total urban population in Bangladesh lives below the national poverty line, having increased as a percentage over the past few years. Within the next 30 years, 100 million people are expected to live in Bangladesh's cities.

Unplanned and uncontrolled urban growth is a hindrance to sustainable development, and multiplies the environmental hazards for citizens. In Bangladesh, most internal migrants eventually arrive at one of its two biggest cities, Dhaka and Chittagong, mainly because the pourashavas (secondary cities) offer less of the amenities associated with urban life. Thus, in order to promote balanced urban growth in Bangladesh, and ease the pressure on resources and infrastructure in the big cities, it is essential to develop the potential of the pourashavas, to make them dynamic, liveable cities, where people can make a living, educate their children, find decent housing with running water, electricity and sewers, and get high quality medical care.

The pourashavas currently lack basic infrastructure and are unable to provide essential services, particularly for the poor and homeless. However, experience has shown that it is not enough to simply construct roads, water pipes, drains, latrines, waste management facilities, schools and health clinics. Cities are made up of people who have to be involved in the planning, development and maintenance of urban infrastructure. Time and again, well-meaning urban planners have used top-down approaches to construct public latrines, only to find them completely unusable after several months, or markets which were then inaccessible to the poor or women.

Improvements in urban infrastructure and service delivery are only sustainable if linked to participation and governance reforms, as well as proper planning, tax enforcement and private sector participation. Improved local governance is therefore one of the explicit goals of the Government.

Creating liveable secondary cities

In a German-funded support project for participatory planning, concerned residents of Mymensingh were asked to a day-long workshop to discuss what needed to be done to address the pourashava's waste management crisis. Those invited included rickshaw pullers and waste collectors, traders and buyers. Although Mymensingh residents create an estimated 103.3 tons of solid waste every day, the pourashavas could only collect 70 tons per day, thus leaving behind an extra 30 tons per day in open spaces, rivers and ponds.

The Mayor of Mymensingh asked workshop participants to suggest an effective and sustainable solid waste management system for the pourashavas. The participants emphasised organic waste composting, and recycling of materials such as glass, paper and plastics as being central to any action plan, and also identified small enterprises, garbage collectors and community-based organisations who could implement the plan with the municipal government. There is now a Solid Waste Management Action Plan for Mymensingh.

No information on homeless populations in urban Bangladesh has been officially collected since the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) first carried out a homeless population survey in 1997. Officials in the 23 cities and towns where the UK-funded Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction (UPPR – 2009-2015) project works also lack statistics on homeless populations. Because of this absence of information, targeting and meeting the needs of the homeless is a considerable challenge.

The situation of children in the slums can be especially dire. They are frequently left alone, or in the care of siblings, while parents work, and often they do not attend school. So, there is a need to introduce new social security mechanisms to address the needs of urban areas, in the form of a basic safety net to reduce poverty and promote development for the very poor and destitute, particularly children. Studies have shown that the most efficient model is a system of small transfer payments to extremely poor households, which are tied to specific conditions, such as

the requirement to send the children to school. In such systems, families actually use the money for food, health care and education of their children. They therefore invest in the future earning power and social integration of their children – making the transfers a highly effective contribution to local economic growth, since the very poor also have a very high propensity to spend their earnings. Furthermore, such social transfers tend not to be subject to high levels of corruption. The Government is trying to put in place such social safety systems and mechanisms for the most vulnerable urban poor.

Homeless populations of various sizes are spread throughout cities and towns, and because of their low visibility they tend to be overlooked by government and non-government interventions. Identifying homeless populations and sensitising local officials to their plight increases the visibility of homeless populations and eases the development of realistic interventions to address their needs. The homeless poor live in railway/bus stations, launch terminals, pavements, parks, unused and dilapidated buildings, public buildings and business centres, flyovers, construction sites, and so on. Identifying their numbers, and the places where they sleep, is the first step towards integrating the homeless into projects. Bangladesh's social safety net programmes have a good record of protecting the poor from destitution in the wake of natural disasters in the rural areas. However, their record is less good for dealing with urban slum-dwellers. Reaching and supporting them requires innovative approaches, working with local organisations, service providers, NGOs, philanthropists and educational and religious institutions.

The most common occupations held by homeless people in cities have been identified as begging, sex work and non-skilled labour, if they are lucky.

The UPPR project found that the homeless poor were 'invisible', and estimates of their numbers prior to the project were highly inaccurate. Involving local government officials in the project's survey increased their interest and willingness to participate. The findings of the survey made local officials and stakeholders sympathetic to the plight of the homeless. Since a creative and flexible approach is required to lift them out of poverty, less creative poverty alleviation programmes have failed to reach the homeless poor. They have been

so difficult to locate. The needs of these homeless vary widely and are specific to their location; therefore, developing a service delivery system in one location to address all their needs may not be feasible. Homelessness is a by-product of the rural-urban migration nexus, and so addressing the push factors of rural-urban migration, such as lack of employment and low incomes, through interventions like the UK's large Chars Livelihood Programme, can reduce the influx of rural-urban migrants and reduce the numbers of homeless by keeping them nearer their original home areas.

The UK's UPPR project is intended to contribute to reduced urban poverty in Bangladesh through sustainably improving the livelihoods and living conditions of 3 million poor and extremely poor people, especially women and children, living in urban areas. The outputs include mobilising and supporting urban poor communities to form representative, inclusive and well-managed groups; supported poor urban communities which develop healthy and secure living environments; and supported urban poor and extremely poor people acquiring resources, knowledge and skills, to increase their incomes and assets.

Location of UPPR Project Working Towns



Asea Begum, 35, has relied on her district's Community Development Committee for social and economic support. (Photo by UPPR)

In Mymensingh, it was not long ago that Asea Begum, 35, and her family had only one meal a day, consisting of plain rice and a few pieces of chilli. Her growing children were always hungry, and her husband, who pulls rickshaws all day, was continually exhausted

It's dark inside Begum's one-room house, which also doubles as her grocery store. There are jars containing pulses, grains, spices and dried biscuits on her shelves. A little girl runs in with a small plastic bottle which Begum fills with cooking oil, in exchange for some change. Begum started this shop with a loan of 6,000 taka (about €75) from her local Community Development Committee, supported by the UK-funded and UNDP-implemented project (she later became a member of the committee). After repaying her first loan, Begum took another loan to buy goats, which she raises and sells in front of her house. After paying all her expenses, she has about €13 left every month.

Begum's committee has provided assistance far beyond simple loans. When her oldest daughter, who has a mental disability, was abandoned by her husband and returned home, the family's still-meagre income was not enough to feed the extra person. Begum's tenuous situation made her eligible to apply for a block grant to expand her business. She purchased a refrigerator with the grant, which enabled her to store more goods for longer period of time. This has increased her income to a sustainable level, and the community has access to products which they did not have before.



The Community Development Committees provide social and economic support for poor women who bear the grunt of poverty in urban slums in Bangladesh. (Photo by UPPR)

Begum's life remains far from easy, but by selling groceries and rearing goats, she has been able to replace the flimsy bamboo walls with sturdier material. Her family eats three meals a day, which often includes vegetables and fish. Most of all, she has a cadre of other women whom she can rely on for support.

The improvements in her life have inspired two other residents in her community to take up similar ventures. She isn't worried about competition, because she has good-quality products and her customers come from far away to purchase them.

EU Urban Sector Donors	EU Sector Disbursements in € million			
	2009	2010	2011	Totals
UK	4.8	15.2	12.6	€ 32.6 million
Germany	0.9	1.5	5.2	€ 7.6 million
Totals	€ 5.7 million	€ 16.7 million	€ 17.8 million	€ 40.2 million

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

As the world's most densely populated country, Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, in particular earthquakes, floods and cyclones. This vulnerability is exacerbated by climate change. 2007 was a particularly harsh year for Bangladesh, when two spells of monsoon floods and a super-cyclone, SIDR, hit the country. The disasters caused extensive damage, with 9 million people seriously affected. Their houses, food stocks and livelihoods were damaged or destroyed, along with water, sanitation and health infrastructures.

Ensuring that humanitarian aid delivers quick results for victims of natural disasters has never been more critical. Complacency is not an option, and saving lives, preventing suffering and building resilience are hallmarks of good humanitarian assistance. This requires anticipation, leadership and innovation, and humanitarian assistance must be delivered on the basis of need, and need alone. It must also respect the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence as outlined in the internationally-agreed 23 Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship (added at the end of this section). They arose from a 2003 conference convened by the Swedish Government.

The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid

As the world's largest international humanitarian aid donor, the European Union (Member States and the European Union Institutions), has a particular responsibility in spearheading this international endeavour.

In December 2006, the EU launched a wide-ranging consultation of Member States and humanitarian organisations to develop an EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid to deal with the major issues confronting donors and implementing organisations. This process identified considerable consensus on the challenges faced by humanitarians, and on the need for a clear EU position. The outcome was a joint statement entitled "The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid" signed in December 2007 by the three European

Institutions (Council, Parliament and Commission). The Consensus sets out the values, guiding principles and policy scope of EU humanitarian aid, and strengthens the EU's capacity to help people suffering in crisis zones across the globe.

See: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/consensus_en.htm

The European Union's Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection Organisation (ECHO) provides emergency assistance and relief to the victims of natural disasters, worldwide. The aid goes directly to those in distress, irrespective of race, religion or political convictions. ECHO ensures goods and services get to crisis zones fast, and it funds essential supplies, foodstuffs, medicines, medical equipment, medical teams, water purification teams and logistical support. Its grants cover emergency aid, food aid and aid to refugees and displaced persons worth more than €51.2 million for Bangladesh over the last 3 years. ECHO's funding is channelled via selected implementing partners, including NGOs such as Save the Children, Muslim Aid, Médecins Sans Frontières, Oxfam, as well as international agencies such as some UN agencies (e.g. World Food Programme), the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the International Committee of the Red Cross.



Bangladesh's monsoon rains and high tides in 2011 flooded vast tracts of land, leaving hundreds of thousands uprooted from their homes in the south western district of Satkhira.

In Bangladesh, ECHO combines its emergency interventions with the longer term strategies of European Union and Government of Bangladesh development cooperation, to ensure the subsequent continuity of livelihoods and food security for beneficiaries. Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development Programmes in food security, disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction are particularly important, as structural issues often

directly contribute to humanitarian crises caused by sudden disasters. ECHO funds programmes to increase the capacities of communities and local authorities to enhance their preparedness and decrease their vulnerabilities to natural disasters. The emergency programmes provide food, safe water, basic household items, emergency health care, temporary shelter and emergency livelihood assistance. The post disaster programmes focus on kick-starting the recovery of livelihoods, and rehabilitation of basic needs (shelter, access to sanitation and water). Since 2012 ECHO has been assisting the Ministry of Health to implement the strategy to tackle severe malnutrition, with rates above emergency thresholds.

Sahena Begum lives in the village of Kanderpara in northern Bangladesh, and is no stranger to serious flooding. However, Sahena and her fellow villagers have never been better prepared. Special training sessions, paid for by the UK, have put Sahena's women's group at the centre of the community's flood survival strategy. Through training, the women were shown how, through simple practical measures, they can increase their chances of weathering future storms.



*Sahena puts the finishing touches to a portable clay oven.
Photo credit: Amin/Oxfam*

Now, a plan of action is in place, as are the resources needed to see the storm out. After being notified of any flood warnings through a radio supplied by the training providers, the women firstly call a meeting to alert other villagers to the situation. Children, the elderly and the sick are then escorted to the village shelter, built on a raised plinth, a ten-minute walk away.

Encouraged by the group, people have begun to raise the foundations of their homes above flood-levels. The training taught them how to build portable clay ovens, which, being stored high up, out of harm's way, keep the village fed, if fields and crops lie under water. Stored alongside the ovens are wood for fuel and supplies of preserved vegetables.

'Because we are now aware, our families can be saved from many losses. At the beginning, my family did not support me,' she adds. 'My husband and his brother tried to stop me.' But Sahena refused to be held back. 'That we have united to form this group is a matter of pride for us women,' she says. 'We are not born to suffer. We are born to fight.'

Community Volunteers Respond to Devastating Landslide

Chittagong suffered several devastating landslides on June 11, 2007 as torrential rains sparked a series of devastating landslides, with 95 people killed or missing. The heaviest rainfall in a quarter of a century saturated the hillsides, giving residents no chance to escape as a tide of mud and water swept down on their homes in the early hours of the morning, burying whole families under mud and debris while they slept.



*By the end of the operation, the team of volunteers had saved 8 people.
Photo : ActionAid-Bangladesh*

Volunteers, recruited and trained under the European Union Humanitarian Aid disaster preparedness project (DIPECHO), played a vital role in search and rescue operations. They were the first to respond and were able to rescue people and recover bodies at an early stage.

One of the volunteers recalls: 'We started evacuating people from their houses. Suddenly we heard a big bang, followed by people crying. We quickly rushed to the place where there had been houses, but there was only mud. It looked like the hilly area had become barren land.'

The volunteers worked alongside the fire and civil defence services. One volunteer, Imam Hussain, said 'The training we received in search and rescue, first-aid, etc., and the discussions we had, helped me respond quickly'.

The volunteers directly contacted the Chittagong Medical College Hospital, where a mass casualty management training exercise had previously been carried out as part of the DIPECHO project.

'We lacked equipment to dig into the mud,' one said, 'but due to our training, we had the courage to respond and worked with our bare hands.' Bulldozers provided by The Chittagong City Corporation and the Chittagong Development Authority arrived to assist the rescue workers.

Under the DIPECHO project, implemented by Action Aid, 450 community volunteers were trained in Chittagong and in Kurigram.

After coping with exceptional flooding in August 2007, the southern districts of Bangladesh were hit by a violent cyclone in November of the same year. Winds reaching 220 km per hour wiped out entire villages. Around 10,000 people lost their lives and more than 8 million were affected. Their houses were destroyed, their livestock lost, their rice yields ruined, and their precious few belongings washed away. ECHO quickly provided €8 million in emergency aid, plus €12 million to complete the first round of emergency aid. NGOs such as Muslim Aid, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide and Caritas, provided food, shelter, water and livelihood support in the form of livestock and "cash for work" activities.



*Aklima and her family in front of their home
Photo :
EC/ECHO/Claire Barrault*

Aklima Begam is in tears, yet feels lucky because none of her 4 children were hurt. When they hurriedly sought refuge at the nearby cyclone shelter they had to leave their poultry and goats behind. Their home was damaged and flooded, and the livestock, their only means of subsistence, perished. Aklima, a single mother, benefited from 'cash for work', funded by ECHO. The money enabled her to make small repairs to her home and purchase chickens to replace those she had lost. She is so happy she did not have to take her daughters out of school: 'I wish for them to get married only when they are adults. I was married off at 13'.

Insan is 75 years old. He lives in a small shack with his only remaining son. Both his grandsons perished in the cyclone. When asked why he did not seek refuge before the storm he says there was no room in the cyclone shelter, which was overcrowded with people from neighbouring villages. He did not know where to go.



*Insan and his son in front of their damaged shelter
Photo :
EC/ECHO/Claire Barrault*

Aside from food, aid workers assisted the affected communities to rebuild roads, and clear ponds and fields. They provided latrines and safe water, as well as livestock and vocational equipment, such as sewing machines. Funding covered food to survive, shelter to live in, water to drink, sanitation to prevent diseases and opportunities for earning money. ECHO funded resettlement and support for 14,000 Rohingya refugees living in overcrowded conditions in a makeshift camp, adjacent to the border with Myanmar, without access to safe, drinkable water or

adequate sanitation. 20 000 Rohingyas are also living in a makeshift camp alongside the official camp at Kutapalong. Life-saving nutritional activities, water, sanitation, hygiene and health care are provided in a difficult situation. In addition, ECHO responded by funding food aid and health care for communities of indigenous peoples in the Chittagong Hill Tracts when, in 2008, a huge increase in the rodent population resulted in field crops and food stocks being decimated.

EU Humanitarian Sector Donors	EU Sector Disbursements in € million			
	2009	2010	2011	Totals
European Union	8.0	18.8	24.4	€ 51.2 million
UK	1.0	4.2	4.3	€ 9.5 million
Germany	0.5	0.1	0.1	€ 0.7 million
Sweden	0.6	0.0	0.1	€ 0.7 million
Totals	€ million	€ million	€ million	€ million

The 23 Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship

1. The objectives of humanitarian action are to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and in the aftermath of man-made crises and natural disasters, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situations.
2. Humanitarian action should be guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity, meaning the centrality of saving human lives and alleviating suffering wherever it is found; impartiality, meaning the implementation of actions solely on the basis of need, without discrimination between or within affected populations; neutrality, meaning that humanitarian action must not favour any side in an armed conflict or other dispute where such action is carried out; and independence, meaning the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.
3. Humanitarian action includes the protection of civilians and those no

longer taking part in hostilities, and the provision of food, water and sanitation, shelter, health services and other items of assistance, undertaken for the benefit of affected people and to facilitate the return to normal lives and livelihoods.

General Principles

4. Respect and promote the implementation of international humanitarian law, refugee law and human rights.
5. While reaffirming the primary responsibility of states for the victims of humanitarian emergencies within their own borders, strive to ensure flexible and timely funding, on the basis of the collective obligation of striving to meet humanitarian needs.
6. Allocate humanitarian funding in proportion to needs and on the basis of needs assessments.
7. Request implementing humanitarian organisations to ensure, to the greatest possible extent, adequate involvement of beneficiaries in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian response.

8. Strengthen the capacity of affected countries and local communities to prevent, prepare for, mitigate and respond to humanitarian crises, with the goal of ensuring that governments and local communities are better able to meet their responsibilities and co-ordinate effectively with humanitarian partners.
9. Provide humanitarian assistance in ways that are supportive of recovery and long-term development, striving to ensure support, where appropriate, to the maintenance and return of sustainable livelihoods and transitions from humanitarian relief to recovery and development activities.
10. Support and promote the central and unique role of the United Nations in providing leadership and co-ordination of international humanitarian action, the special role of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the vital role of the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and non-governmental organisations in implementing humanitarian action.

Good Practices in Donor Financing, Management and Accountability

(a) Funding

11. Strive to ensure that funding of humanitarian action in new crises does not adversely affect the meeting of needs in ongoing crises.
12. Recognising the necessity of dynamic and flexible response to changing needs in humanitarian crises, strive to ensure predictability and flexibility in funding to United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and to other key humanitarian organisations
13. While stressing the importance of transparent and strategic priority-setting and financial planning by implementing organisations, explore the possibility of reducing, or enhancing the flexibility of, earmarking, and of introducing longer-term funding arrangements.
14. Contribute responsibly, and on the basis of burden-sharing, to United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeals and to International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement appeals, and actively support the formulation of Common Humanitarian Action Plans (CHAP) as the primary instrument for strategic planning, prioritisation and co-ordination in complex emergencies.

(b) Promoting standards and enhancing implementation

15. Request that implementing humanitarian organisations fully adhere to

good practice and are committed to promoting accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in implementing humanitarian action.

16. Promote the use of Inter-Agency Standing Committee guidelines and principles on humanitarian activities, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the 1994 Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief.
17. Maintain readiness to offer support to the implementation of humanitarian action, including the facilitation of safe humanitarian access.
18. Support mechanisms for contingency planning by humanitarian organisations, including, as appropriate, allocation of funding, to strengthen capacities for response.
19. Affirm the primary position of civilian organisations in implementing humanitarian action, particularly in areas affected by armed conflict. In situations where military capacity and assets are used to support the implementation of humanitarian action, ensure that such use is in conformity with international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles, and recognises the leading role of humanitarian organisations.
20. Support the implementation of the 1994 Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief and the 2003 Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies.

(c) Learning and accountability

21. Support learning and accountability initiatives for the effective and efficient implementation of humanitarian action.
22. Encourage regular evaluations of international responses to humanitarian crises, including assessments of donor performance.
23. Ensure a high degree of accuracy, timeliness, and transparency in donor reporting on official humanitarian assistance spending, and encourage the development of standardised formats for such reporting.

EU DONOR PAGES



DENMARK

Denmark and Bangladesh have a long and close partnership, which dates back to 1972. Over the years, the cooperation has developed from traditional grant development assistance, also to include trade and commercial cooperation as well as policy dialogue on global issues. The cooperation has developed into a strong and diverse partnership. Denmark supports the Government of Bangladesh, civil society and the private sector in achieving the national development goals set out in Bangladesh's 6th Five-Year Plan (2011-2015) and the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the Government's vision to develop Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021. Denmark also promotes aid effectiveness and supports the 2010 Joint Cooperation Strategy signed by Government of Bangladesh and Development Partners.

Denmark's engagement in Bangladesh aims to:

- Contribute to political stability and promote democracy, respect for human rights, rule of law and good governance.
- Contribute to rights-based poverty reduction, growth and sustainable development.
- Increase Danish exports to Bangladesh and promote commercial cooperation in general.
- Collaborate closely on key global issues, such as counter-terrorism, peace keeping, climate change and trade policy.

Danish development assistance is provided within the following main areas:

- Human Rights and Good Governance
- Agriculture
- Water Supply and Sanitation
- Private sector Development (via the Danida Partnership Programme)

Besides these core interventions, assistance is also provided for:

- Climate Change, and
- Infrastructure Development (a Mixed Credit Programme)

Throughout, rights, democracy and gender are important cross cutting themes in Denmark's development assistance to Bangladesh.

For more information check: <http://ambdhaka.um.dk/en> and <http://um.dk/en>

Sectors	Values in € millions			
	2009	2010	2011	Totals
Income and Poverty	12.0	12.9	12.9	€38.7 million
Water and Sanitation	8.5	7.7	9.8	€ 26.0 million
Environmental Sustainability	1.1	1.2	0.4	€ 2.7 million
Governance	9.9	8.0	6.6	€ 24.5 million
Totals	€ 31.5 million	€ 29.8 million	€ 29.7 million	€91.9 million



EUROPEAN UNION

Relations between the European Commission, back then representing the Development Programme of the European Communities, and Bangladesh date from 1973. The first Commercial Cooperation Agreement, signed in 1976, was replaced in March 2001 by an updated Trade and Cooperation Agreement. This agreement paved the way for cooperation on a broad range of issues, indicating an advanced level in the relationship. The European Commission's country analysis and objectives are set out in the new **Country Strategy Paper, covering the years 2007 – 2013** with a total envelope of €403 million. The Strategy is directed towards supporting Bangladesh in achieving its **Millennium Development Goals** and in achieving the government's vision to develop Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021. Additional funds are made available through thematic programmes for food security, or to complement programmes on climate change. The EU Country Strategy for 2007 – 2013 agreed between the EU and the Government of Bangladesh provides funding for 3 focal areas - Human and Social Development, Good Governance and Human Rights, & Economic and Trade Development.

To support Human and Social Development, the main emphasis is upon health and education reforms, especially non-formal primary education. To promote Good Governance and Human Rights, the EU supports a variety of areas including election management, public finance management reform, local government and decentralisation, assistance to the implementation of the CHT peace accord and development of this unique region and improvements to village courts in order to improve access to justice, and human rights projects with civil society organisations. Thirdly, the EU supports the Economic and Trade Development by provision of technical assistance to improve business and investment environments, addressing trade-related issues, such as quality control, and assisting in improving the regulatory environment for business. These core interventions are complemented by support for Environment, Disaster Prevention & Climate Change, which incorporates co-financing of the Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund and activities to improve disaster preparedness and disaster management. Support is also being provided for improved Food Security and Nutrition, through reinforcement of efforts to create social safety nets and to aid social and asset transfers. **Gender, environment and human rights** are important themes throughout.

Humanitarian Aid

Since 1994, humanitarian aid provided by the European Community Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) has played a crucial role in international emergency assistance, responding to natural disasters (floods and cyclones). Emergency assistance projects have contributed to reducing the impact of disasters in Bangladesh, and have provided impetus to flood mitigation and prevention.

Sectors	Disbursements in € millions			
	2009	2010	2011	Totals
Income and Poverty	46.1	38.1	41.8	€ 126.0 million
Human Resource Development	9.6	55.4	23.1	€ 88.1 million
Gender Equality	0.3	1.6	2.2	€ 4.1 million
Environmental Sustainability	7.7	6.7	3.8	€ 18.2 million
Governance	20.6	20.0	17.0	€ 57.6 million
Humanitarian Assistance	8.0	18.8	24.4	€ 51.2 million
Totals	€92.3 million	€140.6 million	€112.3 million	€ 345.2 million

For more information check: <http://delbgd.ec.europa.eu/en/index.htm> and http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm



GERMANY

Since 1972, Germany has been a Development Partner of Bangladesh, providing support mainly through its implementing agencies GIZ and KfW Entwicklungsbank. German Development Cooperation focuses on energy, good governance and health.

Over the years, Germany expanded its support to Bangladesh's energy sector, working in **energy** efficiency, improvement of electricity generation, transmission and distribution installations, and promotion of renewable energy technologies. Recent work on energy efficiency improvement includes, for example, development of an energy efficiency roadmap and implementation of prepayment electricity meters. In the area of renewable energy, together with other development partners, Germany has supported successful propagation of solar home systems, biogas digesters and improved cooking stoves, with special focus on the development of self-sustaining markets for these technologies.

In the **health** sector, Germany contributes to financing a Multi-Donor Trust Fund for the Bangladesh Health, Population, and Nutrition Sector Development Programme. It also provides expertise for piloting a health insurance model as a solution to high out-of-pocket expenditures, as well as strengthening key units of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Germany has also been providing support for HIV/AIDS prevention and response.

German support strengthens local **governance** by linking the financing of infrastructure with promotion of principles of good governance, such as improved transparency, decentralisation and participation of local communities, especially of women. In the field of **human rights**, Germany contributes to improved access for women to the justice system, as well as to reducing overcrowding in prisons.. Together with the EU, Germany also provides support for improved **social and environmental standards** in Bangladesh's most important industry - Textiles.

Moreover, Germany supports the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan with programmes aimed at reducing the impact of **climate change** and preserving **biodiversity** in Bangladesh, as well as fostering the co-management of natural resources between authorities and local communities.

Sectors	Disbursements in € millions			
	2009	2010	2011	Totals
Income and Poverty	5.7	6.2	5.7	€17.6 million
Human Resource Development	23.8	10.6	7.7	€42.1 million
Energy and Infrastructure	11.0	21.1	16.0	€48.1 million
Gender Equality	0.6	1.0	0.6	€2.2 million
Environmental Sustainability	0.9	2.1	4.1	€7.1 million
Governance	3.6	2.4	2.3	€8.3 million
Urban	0.9	1.5	5.2	€7.6 million
Humanitarian Assistance	0.5	0.1	0.1	€0.7 million
Totals	€ 47.0 million	€ 45.0 million	€ 41.7 million	€133.7 million



NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands supports Bangladesh in three focal areas: water management, food security and sexual reproductive rights. All contributions and activities are aligned with Bangladesh's policies and development plans. Within the focal areas, the Netherlands supports private sector development, governance, gender equality and the environment. Development cooperation is also focused on enhancing productivity, increasing investment and improving trade.

Priority sectors

Water

Aiming to contribute to a healthy living environment supporting economic growth in a country with extreme rainfall, high sea water levels, increasing industrial pollution and extensive slum development, the Netherlands-supported Water Programme (2011-2015) focuses upon: (i) sustainable participative water management in existing polders and reclaimed coastal zone land, (ii) river management, (iii) drinking water and sanitation in rural and urban areas, (iv) industrial waste water and (v) institutional strengthening.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

For sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), the focus is on increasing awareness, demand and utilisation of services, plus improvements in service delivery for contraception, with an emphasis on advocacy for family planning, and improved ties between government and the private sector.

Food security

For the Netherlands –supported Food Security Programme, aligned to Bangladesh's Plan of Action under the National Food Policy, the goals will be to improve access to healthy food and foster sustainable production via connecting food security interventions to the water sector, and food security in relation to private sector development and trade. Four areas of cooperation: i) improved management and infrastructure for irrigation purposes, ii) fisheries and aquaculture development, iii) livestock development and iv) food safety and quality improvement.

Sectors	Disbursements in € millions			
	2009	2010	2011	Totals
Income and Poverty	0.6	0.6	0.8	€ 2.0 million
Human Resource Development	15.0	30.3	25.7	€ 71.0 million
Water and Sanitation	17.6	17.7	15.0	€ 50.3 million
Gender Equality	0.9	0.4	0.9	€ 2.2 million
Environmental Sustainability	12.4	7.9	10.7	€ 31.0 million
Governance	3.7	4.1	2.7	€ 10.5 million
Totals	€ 50.2 million	€61.0 million	€55.8 million	€167 million



Gender in Development is the main strategic priority of Spanish Development Cooperation in Bangladesh. Full respect for women’s human rights, and their effective exercise of political rights, are the objectives of the Spanish approach. AECID, the Spanish Development Agency, is financing projects in Bangladesh through NGOs and Multilateral Organisations.

11 NGOs receive support from Spain. All the projects are primarily focused on women’s and gender issues. With support from AECID, GIZ (the German development cooperation organisation) is currently carrying out a project on protection and access to justice for women and children in prison. Spain has also supported a project of access to justice and exercise of Human Rights for women in villages.

The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Food Programme (WFP) are coordinating two programmes in Bangladesh, financed by Spain through a financial facility. This facility aims at strengthening the UN system’s support for Bangladesh, via increased coordination. One programme, which Spain finances, supports improved nutrition for women and children, and another supports the fight against violence on women. Finally, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has received a subsidised and non-tied loan from Spain for the development of small infrastructures in villages of the Haor region of north-eastern Bangladesh.

Sectors	Disbursements in € millions			
	2009	2010	2011	Totals
Income and Poverty	7.7		€ 7.7 million	
Gender Equality	2.7	2.1	14.4	€ 19.2 million
Environmental Sustainability	0.5		21.2	€ 21.7 million
Totals	€3.2 million	€ 9.8 million	€ 35.6 million	€48.6 million



The relationship between Sweden and Bangladesh goes back 40 years since official recognition on February 4, 1972. At the outset, relations were centred on development cooperation but have lately become much more varied, not least due to an impressive increase in trade. Presently, development cooperation between the countries is governed by the Agreement on General Terms and Conditions from 1998 and the Agreement on Development Cooperation from 2008.

Development cooperation

The current overall aim of Swedish development cooperation with Bangladesh is to help improve living conditions for the poor, with particular emphasis on women and children. Non-earmarked pooled funding to the sector programmes in primary education and health constitute some 65 % of the total cooperation programme. Because of Bangladesh’s exposed situation in terms of the changing climate, plus great strains created by ever-increasing urbanisation, urban environment and climate change are also prioritised areas of cooperation. Support to civil society complements sector programmes and contributes to the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights. Sexual and reproductive health and rights, like gender equality, are, in addition, priority areas for Swedish development cooperation. This is currently in the order of €26 million p.a. (235 million Swedish krona).

Trade and Cultural exchange

Swedish retail garment companies buy quality products from Bangladesh, and this has opened the door to further business collaboration between Bangladesh and Sweden. Bangladeshi garment exports to Sweden are three times the size of Swedish imports to Bangladesh (mainly machinery and telecoms equipment). Thus there is great scope for increased trade between the countries.

Cultural exchanges between Sweden and Bangladesh are facilitated by large numbers of students travelling to Sweden to study at universities. Also, Rabindranath Tagore’s award of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913 continues to highlight Bengali culture in Sweden.

Sectors	Disbursements in € millions			
	2009	2010	2011	Totals
Human Resource Development	19.8	15.5	18.8	€54.1 million
Gender Equality	0.5	0.9	0.7	€2.1 million
Environmental Sustainability	4.8	8.4	1.3	€14.5 million
Governance	0.8	1.0	0.8	€2.6 million
Humanitarian Assistance	0.6	0	0.1	€0.7 million
Totals	€26.5 million	€25.8 million	€21.7 million	€74.0 million



UNITED KINGDOM

The UK works in partnership with government, civil society, the private sector and other donors, to maximise the coherence and effectiveness of aid to Bangladesh, via:

Strategic priorities

Assisting improved state capability and resilience so that Bangladesh can better meet the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable; supporting inclusive political settlements and democratic processes by building capacities of elected representatives; supporting elections and improving the public's ability to hold government and local officials to account; continuing to assist improvements in core functions of government, including public financial management, civil service administration, and the justice sector.

Supporting an improved economic climate for Bangladesh, to enhance public service delivery and public safety, and to increase employment and wealth creation opportunities; expanding programmes to strengthen the business climate for increased foreign and domestic investment; at the household level, supporting initiatives to increase access to credit and to markets; strengthening the labour market through skills development, linked to market demand and private sector provision.

Providing support for basic social services, in particular improving maternal health and primary education attainment, with increased investment in government-led approaches and continued support for civil society provision for the poorest and most marginalised.

The UK supports people's ability and opportunity to earn, to improve their quality of life, to participate in decision making, and to increase resilience to natural disaster and climate change, targeting the poorest 10% of the population in both urban and rural areas.

Key Themes

The UK will promote long-term climate resilience and help improve the economic and social status of women, especially relating to jobs, reproductive health, and violence against women. The UK will also support improved nutrition.

Sectors	UK disbursements to Bangladesh in € million			
	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	Totals
Income and Poverty 56.9	76.3	53.9	€ 187.1 million	
Human Resource Development	45.7	36.9	79.0	€ 161.6 million
Water and Sanitation	5.9	7.8	10.8	€ 24.5 million
Gender Equality 6.7	7.6	6.3	€ 20.6 million	
Environmental Sustainability	3.3	11.2	7.5	€ 22.0 million
Governance 14.3	20.1	17.8	€ 52.2 million	
Urban 4.8	15.2	12.6	€ 32.6 million	
Humanitarian Assistance	1.0	4.2	4.3	€ 9.5 million
Totals €138.6 million	€179.3 million	€192.2 million	€510.1 million	