



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan
Foundation



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Foreword

It is with both humility and determination that I present to you the **Annual Report for the year 2024** of **ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan Foundation**. As the Founder and Executive Director, I feel a deep sense of responsibility to reflect not only on our achievements, but also on the formidable challenges we have navigated together during a year of profound uncertainty and transition.

The year 2024 unfolded under the shadow of significant national and global disruptions. The parliamentary elections in Bangladesh, followed by the mid-year political unrest and governance transition, shook the foundations of institutions across the country. The resulting instability weakened every business sector, disrupted community livelihoods, and disproportionately impacted the poorest segments of our society. Amid these trials, a looming donor funding crisis also began to emerge, casting new uncertainties over the sustainability of development efforts.

Yet in the face of these headwinds, ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan Foundation stood firm, anchored in our core values of integrity, innovation, and service to people and the planet. We recalibrated, responded swiftly to shifting realities, and continued our mission to uplift communities through environmental conservation, sustainable agriculture, education, healthcare, gender equality, economic empowerment, and skill development.

This report documents not only our programs and outcomes, but also the resilience of our organization and the courage of the communities we serve. It tells the story of how, despite political and economic turbulence, ASPADA remained a dependable partner, offering critical support, building local capacity, and amplifying community voices in times of uncertainty.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without the unwavering commitment of our staff, the enduring faith of our stakeholders, and the solidarity of our partner organizations. I am deeply grateful for their contributions and proud of the collaborative spirit that has defined our work this year.

As we move forward, we do so with clear eyes and strong hearts. The path ahead may be uncertain, but our purpose is unwavering. We recognize that the challenges facing our nation, economic hardship, environmental fragility, and social inequality, are deeply interconnected. And it is precisely for this reason that our work must continue, now more than ever.

With renewed commitment and adaptive strategies, ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan Foundation will continue to serve as a catalyst for positive change, building resilience where it's needed most and nurturing a more just, sustainable future for all.

Thank you for standing with us.



Warm regards,

Lion Md. Abdur Rashid

Founder and Executive Director

ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan Foundation

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Vision

The vision of the ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan Foundation is to improve the socio-economic status of the poor target families. Create the scope of employment for both poor men and women to maintain sustainable standards of living.

Mission

The mission of ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan Foundation is to build capacity for poor families to change their economic and social status in society through development of agro-based livelihoods and income generation activities, primary health care education, disaster mitigation and management, through their empowerment, self-reliance, and improvement of lifestyles by its endeavor for sustainable development.

Goal

Improve the overall socio-economic condition of the target population through institution building, utilizing unused community infrastructure, and improving skills through income generation activities (IGAs), Management capabilities.

Core Values

- Compassion, loyalty, and commitment for, by and with the poor
- Equality and participation
- Integrity, dedication, and professionalism
- Responsibility, accountability, and transparency
- Team spirit
- Indiscrimination on basis of gender, caste, creed or ethnic origin

Our Journey and Achievement

The Journey of ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan Foundation: A Legacy of Grassroots Resilience and Sustainable Development (1993–2024)

ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan Foundation, a non-political, not-for-profit, voluntary social development organization, began its journey in 1993 with a deep-rooted commitment to empowering the marginalized and promoting environmental sustainability. Initially established as ASPADA (Agroforestry Seed Production and Development Association), the organization focused on social awareness, agro-based innovation, and rural poverty alleviation through sustainable farming, agroforestry, and livelihood support.

Under the visionary leadership of Mr. Abdur Rashid, ASPADA emerged from a small but committed circle of changemakers determined to address the unmet needs of pastoral, rural, and semi-urban communities. Their motivation was not just development, it was justice, dignity, and opportunity for the most vulnerable.

ASPADA's guiding philosophy has always been humanistic, holistic, and participatory. It emphasizes unlocking people's potential, not only economically but intellectually, physically, and socially. Recognizing gender inequality as a critical barrier to development, ASPADA has led programs on women's empowerment, gender equity, combatting gender-based violence, and promoting human rights across its working areas.

Growth, Milestones, and Partnerships

The journey began in earnest with ASPADA's registration under the Department of Social Services (DSS) in 1993 and operations launching in Mymensingh district. By 1995, ASPADA introduced a pioneering interest-free microfinance initiative, offering loans without collateral to 50 of the poorest families. The program not only ensured financial access but cultivated saving habits and self-reliance.

In 1997, ASPADA became a proud Partner Organization (PO) of Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), enabling it to expand and institutionalize its financial services across more communities.

In 2000, ASPADA partnered with BRAC to open non-formal education centers in Bhaluka Upazila, addressing the critical gap in basic education. The organization later introduced its own "Scholarship for Ultra-Poor Brilliant" program, offering educational support to academically talented youth from low-income families, some of whom now serve as professionals in health, engineering, and agriculture across Bangladesh.

Recognizing its excellence in grassroots finance and inclusion, ASPADA received the Citi Micro entrepreneurship Award in 2007, being honored as the Best Microfinance Institution of the Year. The same spirit of innovation and accountability led to registration with the NGO Affairs Bureau in 2008, unlocking the ability to collaborate with international donors and agencies.

Adapting to a New Era: 2024 and Beyond

As ASPADA steps into its 31st year, the development landscape in Bangladesh is shifting rapidly. The 2024 parliamentary election, followed by widespread political unrest, institutional disruption, and policy instability, severely impacted grassroots development. Economic pressure mounted across all sectors. The

poorest households faced unprecedented income erosion, while donor agencies signaled caution, tightening budgets amid global uncertainties.

ASPADA has responded to these challenges with resilience and adaptation, diversifying its programs to focus more sharply on:

- Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction
- Environmental restoration and natural resource management
- Youth skill-building and employment linkage
- Public health and community resilience
- Strengthening local governance and social accountability

In collaboration with national networks and international partners, ASPADA continues to design programs that not only respond to crisis but build long-term community resilience. Despite shrinking funds and rising needs, the foundation remains unwavering in its mission to uplift the most vulnerable with dignity and innovation.



Figure 1: Panoramic view of working area

The Community Based Organization (CBO) represents a potent approach to development.

To ensure the sustainability and impact of our development efforts aimed at empowering rural communities, ASPADA has fostered the formation of community-based organizations (CBOs) across its operational areas. These grassroots structures serve as vital platforms for raising awareness about social injustices, enabling individuals and communities to better understand the political and economic systems that shape their lives, whether as barriers or enablers of progress. Through capacity building and participatory engagement, we work to equip community members with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to drive transformative change both within their villages and in wider civil society.

Our approach actively confronts discrimination and exploitation in all forms, advocating for the rights of the most marginalized, including landless farmers, women, day laborers, indigenous groups, and other disadvantaged populations. ASPADA supports these communities in securing sustainable livelihoods, accessing essential social services, and amplifying their voices in local, regional, and national decision-making processes, ensuring they are not only included but empowered to lead.



Figure 2: Meeting of Community Based Organization

Community-based organizations (CBOs) have been formed under a variety of projects and programs, with a significant number established through ASPADA's microfinance initiatives. As of now, a total of 5,553 groups have been organized under the microfinance program, comprising 948 male groups and 4,806 female groups, with a combined membership of 131,611 individuals, 21,598 men and 110,013 women.

In addition to microfinance, the Health Cooperative Project has facilitated the formation of 30 Self-Reliance Groups (SRGs), each composed of around 20 female members, fostering community health awareness and mutual support. Similarly, under the Agriculture Modernization Program, six farmers'

groups have been established, with a target to intensively support 50 such groups in the near future. Other initiatives, such as the Hazardous Child Labor Eradication Project, Vulnerable Group Development Project, and Climate Change Adaptation Project, also utilize a community group-based model to promote sustainability and grassroots engagement.

Given that nearly 80% of the group members are women, ASPADA places a strong emphasis on women's empowerment, nurturing their capacity to challenge gender-based discrimination, both within the home and in broader societal interactions involving employers, educational institutions, government services, and community structures.

The groups are effectively run through democratic leadership, and members receive training in financial management, record-keeping, monitoring, and social participation. These leadership development efforts enable elected group leaders to confidently engage with external stakeholders, including local government bodies, NGOs, landlords, private enterprises, and civil society organizations. Moreover, all members are well-informed of their rights and responsibilities, not only within their groups but also in their broader roles as citizens, workers, consumers, and parents, fostering a holistic approach to civic participation and self-reliance.



Figure 3: Livelihood of farming community in Mymensingh

HEALTH PROGRAMS

1. Enhanced Nutritional Security through Reciprocity (ENSR) Project.

Project Duration	January 2022 to March 2025
Donor	Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation (Norec)
Approved Funds	195000 USD

Project Overview: The ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan Foundation is serving as the coordinating partner in an international exchange initiative in collaboration with Pahal Jan Vikas Sahayag Sansthan (Indore, India) and Krousar Yeung Association (Phnom Penh, Cambodia). This project facilitates staff exchanges aimed at strengthening knowledge, skills, and organizational capacities in the field of health and nutrition.

Through this exchange, participating organizations seek to equip their teams with innovative approaches and practical experiences to enhance health and nutrition services for their respective target communities. Young professionals will act as key agents of this knowledge transfer, drawing insights from host organizations and integrating those learnings into their home institutions. They will also conduct hands-on training for existing staff and support the replication of effective practices and activities.

With this collaborative approach, we are confident that the exchange of young professionals will lead to meaningful capacity building and improved outcomes in community health and nutrition.



Figure 4: Exchange participants with SRG members in Bhaluka, Mymensingh.

The Aim of the Project: The project's overarching objective is to enhance the internal competencies of participating organizations in the field of public health nutrition through the mutual exchange of approaches, tools, and practices. Additionally, it aims to contribute to knowledge-building among existing health team members and target communities in the field of nutrition. The specific objectives are outlined as follows:

- To learn and replicate various effective approaches and practices in implementing nutrition-sensitive activities, thereby promoting healthy living practices among the respective target beneficiaries.
- To develop resource persons through the exchange of staff members, creating opportunities to augment new knowledge through personnel exchanges or the recruitment of NOREC participants.
- To enhance internal competencies in community health and nutrition improvement.
- To gain insights into different country cultures, customs, and practices that can support healthy living and development.

Implemented Activities: In 2024, ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan Foundation undertook a comprehensive set of activities in the Bhaluka Upazila of Mymensingh district to improve the nutritional status and overall well-being of target communities. These initiatives were designed to strengthen community health systems, promote sustainable behavioral change, and foster local ownership of nutrition-related practices. Key accomplishments during the reporting year include:

- **Feasibility Assessment for Nutrition Resource Centre (NRC):** A formal study was conducted to assess the feasibility of establishing a Nutrition Resource Centre in Bhaluka, which informed the design of a context-specific implementation strategy tailored to community needs.
- **Capacity Building of Health Teams:**
 - Conducted in-house training sessions for ASPADA's health team on the establishment and operational mechanisms of the NRC.
 - Trained field staff through hands-on, field-level implementation exercises, benefiting 30 Self-Reliant Groups (SRGs).
- **Participatory Learning Action (PLA) Approach:**
 - Developed and rolled out a PLA-based strategy to raise awareness on community health and nutrition.
 - Designed training modules and conducted capacity-building workshops for the Health Cooperative and ENRICH project teams.
 - Successfully implemented the PLA approach across 30 SRGs on a rotational basis.
- **Promotion of 12 Family Key Practices:**
 - Designed a comprehensive implementation strategy and training curriculum based on 12 essential family health and nutrition practices.
 - Created Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials including flip charts, handbills, and posters to popularize good practices among community members.
 - Delivered regular knowledge-building sessions to SRGs to embed these practices at the household level.
- **Community Engagement and Counseling:**
 - Facilitated regular SRG network meetings to strengthen group coordination and promote peer learning.
 - Provided nutritional counseling through the static clinic to SRG members on a continuous basis.

- Conducted yard meetings with mothers of severely malnourished children to provide individualized meal planning support.
- **Youth Engagement and Training:**
 - Trained youth community volunteers on healthy living and nutritional awareness, aiming to build a new generation of informed health ambassadors.
- **Technical Support and Collaboration:**
 - Provided ongoing technical backstopping to the ASPADA team to ensure smooth implementation of new approaches.
 - Actively collaborated with local government family planning workers to register pregnancies and facilitate antenatal and postnatal care (ANC/PNC) for targeted beneficiaries.
- **Nutrition Education Curriculum:**
 - Developed a structured training module comprising 10 interactive sessions (3 hours each) on family-level nutrition management and healthy lifestyles.
 - Delivered these sessions during regular monthly SRG meetings to enhance learning retention and practical application.

These integrated interventions reflect ASPADA's continued commitment to building resilient community health structures through empowerment, knowledge-sharing, and inclusive participation. The outcomes have laid a strong foundation for scaling up nutrition-focused initiatives in 2025 and beyond.



Figure 5: Exchange participants are conducting PLA and 12 family keys session with SRG members.

Challenges and Lesson Learned: During the reporting period, the project encountered several operational challenges that impacted the smooth implementation of activities and exchange initiatives.

One significant challenge was ensuring effective learning among exchange participants, which requires consistent field visits and direct engagement with target beneficiaries. However, due to language barriers, participants were initially unable to conduct field visits independently and required the presence of accompanying staff. As the designated contact persons are often senior officials with demanding schedules, coordinating these visits proved difficult. To address this, it would be helpful if Norec could consider providing additional support by assigning dedicated accompanying personnel for such visits.

Another major hurdle involved the processing of working visas, which has become increasingly complex in all participating countries. This issue was particularly pronounced in India, where the only viable option for entry was under the restrictive entry category visa, limiting flexibility for project implementation.

Additionally, evolving bilateral relations among participating countries have influenced visa regulations and international travel protocols. These changes have created uncertainty and logistical constraints, thereby affecting the seamless exchange of participants and planned activities.



Figure 6: Progress review meeting with Norec

Some notable learnings include: Throughout the reporting period, several valuable lessons emerged from the implementation of the exchange initiative across participating countries and organizations. One of the primary insights was a deeper understanding of how development activities are carried out within different organizational and national contexts. This cross-learning experience enriched the perspectives of all stakeholders involved.

Regular online partner meetings proved to be highly beneficial in facilitating smooth participant exchanges, aligning expectations, tracking progress toward targets, and enhancing overall partnership

coordination. These virtual engagements provided a platform for ongoing communication and collaborative decision-making.

Participants and organizers also gained important knowledge about the logistical and administrative requirements for international travel, particularly from third-country training venues and their respective home countries. For instance, Pahal participants faced challenges traveling directly from Kathmandu to Phnom Penh, while ASPADA participants encountered unexpected conditions when departing from Dhaka to Phnom Penh—such as the need to carry over \$1,000 in cash and the requirement for a return ticket booked under the same reference. These experiences underscored the need for clear, advance information on travel documentation and port-of-entry expectations.

In terms of visa processing, it became evident that understanding country-specific visa regulations is crucial. ASPADA participants, for example, initially applied for a volunteer (employment) visa to work with an Indian organization, which was rejected. A subsequent application under the "X" category visa was accepted, highlighting the importance of selecting the correct visa type based on host country regulations.

Cultural adaptation also emerged as a key area of learning, particularly regarding the need to respect local customs and practices when arranging participant accommodations in host countries. Lastly, the initiative reinforced the value of participatory decision-making and mutual respect among partner organizations, which are essential for maintaining a strong, sustainable, and equitable collaboration.

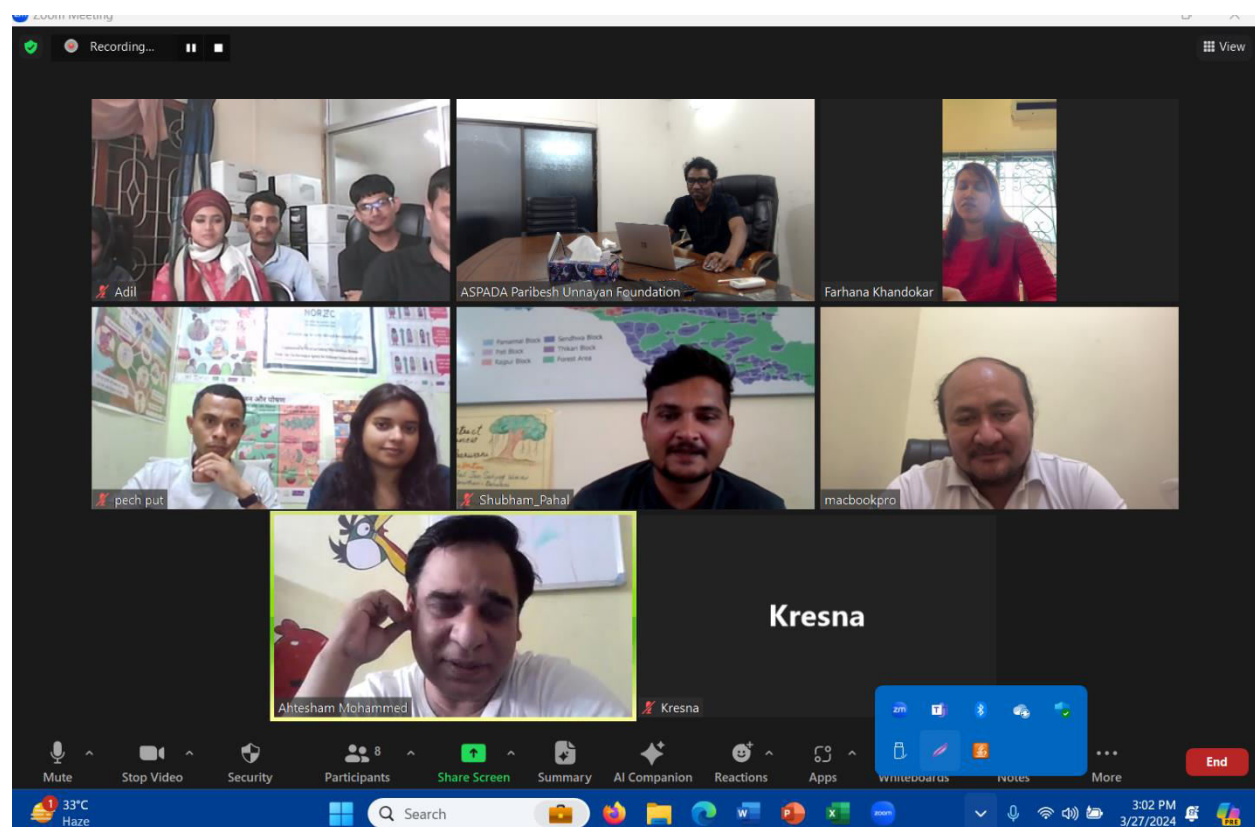


Figure 7: Exchange participants are in monthly partners meeting.

Measuring Impact: The ENSR project has generated several positive outcomes, both within the organization and across the target communities. By the end of the reporting period, ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan Foundation has developed the necessary institutional capacity to extend its nutrition-focused services to a broader population. This has been achieved through the adoption of innovative approaches and best practices learned from partner organizations, which have helped to create service demand among underserved communities.

The skills and knowledge of ASPADA's health team members have significantly improved, particularly in implementing the Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) approach, establishing and managing Nutrition Resource Centres (NRCs), and promoting key family practices aimed at improving nutritional behaviors at the household level. These enhanced competencies have contributed to the delivery of more effective and community-responsive health services.

In addition, the project has led to increased access to essential nutrition services for malnourished populations in Habirbari Union. Local health facilities and ASPADA-run clinics are now better equipped to provide targeted support, resulting in more inclusive and accessible nutritional care for vulnerable groups within the community.

2. Enhancing Resources and Increasing Capacities of Poor Households towards Elimination of their Poverty (ENRICH) Project

Project Duration	July 2014 to Continue
Donor	Palli Karma Shayok Foundation (PKSF)
Approved Funds	BDT 5000000 per year

Project Overview: The Enhancing Resources and Increasing Capacities of Poor Households towards Elimination of their Poverty (ENRICH) project is a holistic household development initiative, where health and nutrition play a central role. Since 2014, ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan Foundation has been implementing this project in the Hobirbari Union of Bhaluka Upazila, Mymensingh District, with financial support comprising 50% grant funding from PKSF and 50% contribution from ASPADA. In mid-2024, ASPADA strategically shifted the operational focus of the ENRICH project from Hobirbari Union to Mollikbari Union within Bhaluka Upazila. This transition was accompanied by adjustments in the project design to better align with the needs and priorities of the new target community, ensuring more effective delivery of health and nutrition services.

Under this initiative, five Primary Healthcare Centers (PHCCs) are in operation, delivering a comprehensive package of health services focused on maternal and neonatal care, alongside limited curative treatments. The ENRICH program ensures that every household in the union receives at least one monthly visit by a trained health visitor. These visits facilitate the collection of health-related data for all family members, which is documented in household passbooks and maintained in a centralized computer database for effective tracking and follow-up.

Weekly satellite clinics are organized by health assistants and attended by qualified MBBS doctors. Additionally, periodic specialized health camps, including services in vision, dental, cardiac care, diabetes, gynecology, and more, are conducted with the involvement of medical specialists. Patients requiring advanced care are referred to both public and private hospitals, where treatment is arranged free of charge.

As part of its preventive health measures, the ENRICH project has successfully implemented a deworming campaign, distributing free albendazole tablets to 100% of registered households for all members above five years of age. The project also promotes nutrition-sensitive interventions such as kitchen gardening, providing practical cooking sessions on nutrition management, and delivering targeted nutritional education to pregnant and lactating mothers as well as caregivers of young children.

Together, these efforts reflect ASPADA's integrated and community-centered approach to health care, underscoring its commitment to reducing poverty through improved well-being and human development.



Figure 8: Health camp of ENRICH project in Bhaluka, Mymensingh.

The aim of the Project: The health component of the ENRICH project is designed to improve health-seeking behavior among impoverished communities, with a particular focus on ensuring the well-being of women, children, and the elderly. More broadly, the overarching goal of the ENRICH initiative is to uphold

human dignity and freedom by systematically and sustainably reducing poverty. The ultimate aim is to eliminate poverty altogether and promote lasting development at the household level within the project's target unions.

Activities Implemented: To achieve the program's overarching goal of fostering a healthy and aware society, the following activities were implemented during the reporting period:

- **Health Card Distribution and Follow-Up:** Health visitors sold 5,132 health cards across the target unions and conducted monthly household visits to check and update the cards.
- **Community Awareness Meetings:** A total of 1,783-yard meetings were conducted on contemporary health issues to raise awareness and promote health-conscious behaviors.
- **Maternal Health Services:** 4,721 pregnant women received antenatal care (ANC) from medically trained personnel, including paramedics and MBBS doctors.
- **Blood Sugar Testing:** 3,032 individuals underwent blood glucose testing using glucometers in community settings.
- **Blood Pressure Monitoring:** Project staff checked the blood pressure of 68,624 community members, contributing to early detection and management of hypertension.
- **Micronutrient Distribution:**
 - 45,600 iron, folic acid, and zinc tablets were distributed among 4,560 pregnant women and adolescent girls.
 - 13,680 micronutrient packets were provided to 1,368 malnourished children.
 - 17,328 albendazole tablets were distributed to women to combat parasitic infections.
 - 50,000 calcium tablets were given to 5,000 women to promote bone health.
- **Clinic Services:**
 - 227 satellite clinics served 8,126 patients with curative care.
 - 1,020 static clinics provided health services to 6,942 patients.
- **Health Camps:**
 - Four general health camps reached 1,560 patients with basic healthcare services.
 - One eye care camp provided services to 412 patients, with 65 receiving free cataract surgeries.
- **Youth and Community Engagement:**
 - An annual sports and cultural event were organized for children, where ENRICH school students participated in various activities and received prizes.
 - A job fair was arranged in collaboration with local industries to support youth employment and job placement.
 - Nine youth committees were formed and became active platforms for 189 young people to engage in community awareness and prevention efforts around early marriage, gender-based violence, eve-teasing, and health and nutrition issues.



Figure 9: Refresher training of health visitors

Challenges and lesson Learned:

- **Rising Patient Load and Case Complexity:** The number of patients seeking healthcare services continues to grow steadily, including individuals presenting with complex medical conditions. This increasing demand poses significant challenges for paramedic doctors in delivering adequate care within their scope and resources.
- **Limited Medical Support vs. Patient Expectations:** While the project provides prescriptions and limited essential medicines or supplements, many patients expect comprehensive free treatment for all ailments. Managing these expectations remains a critical challenge.
- **Barriers to Behavior Change:** Promoting healthy behaviors and encouraging long-term lifestyle changes remain difficult, especially among impoverished and illiterate populations. Although awareness-raising is essential, effectively communicating health messages in a way that is accessible and understandable to these groups is a persistent hurdle.



Figure 10: Rally on International Day of Older Persons.

Measuring Impact: The impact of the ENRICH project can be seen through various significant outcomes:

- **Improved Health Seeking Behavior:** The project has successfully encouraged target communities to seek healthcare more proactively, leading to better health outcomes and early intervention in case of health issues.
- **Accessible Healthcare Services:** By providing doorstep healthcare services throughout the year, the project ensures that local residents have easy access to essential medical assistance, regardless of their location or circumstances.
- **Enhanced Support for Elderly Individuals:** Through tailored healthcare services and support programs, the project addresses the specific health needs of elderly community members, improving their overall wellbeing and quality of life.
- **Nutritional Services Integration:** ASPADA clinics now offer nutritional services, contributing to the overall health and wellbeing of the community by addressing dietary needs and promoting healthy eating habits.
- **Focused Healthcare for Women, Children, and Elderly:** The project recognizes the unique healthcare needs of women, children, and the elderly, providing specialized medical attention and support tailored to their age and gender-specific requirements.
- **Increased Antenatal and Postnatal Care (ANC/PNC) Rates:** As a result of the project's efforts in promoting healthcare awareness and accessibility, there has been a notable rise in the rates of antenatal and postnatal care utilization among pregnant women, leading to improved maternal and child health outcomes.

3. Health Cooperative Project

Project Duration	January 2016 to Continue
Donor	FK Norway and ASPADA
Approved Funds	BDT 3000000 per year

Project Overview: Since 2016, the Health Cooperative Project has been initiated in Bhaluka Upazila of Mymensingh district as part of the "Capacity Building of Organizations through Exchange of Primary Healthcare Approach" initiative. This endeavor, supported financially by FK Norway and technically by SAHAJ Community Hospital, Nepal, aims to bolster primary healthcare services for the impoverished population at their doorstep.

The project facilitated an exchange of primary healthcare approach to enhance the organizational capabilities of both entities. ASPADA embraced the "Cooperative-based Primary Health Care Approach" practiced by SAHAJ Community Hospital, while SAHAJ adopted ASPADA's "Door-to-Door Primary Health Care Model." In 2019, the FK Norway-funded project concluded, and the partnership ended. However, ASPADA continued to sustain the cooperative using its own resources, leading to the establishment of the

"Health Cooperative Project of ASPADA."



Figure 11: SRGs Network Meeting at Bhaluka

As part of the FK Norway-supported exchange project, ASPADA initiated the formation of 30 Self-Reliance Groups (SRGs) with the goal of establishing a "Community-Based Cooperative Hospital." However, upon the conclusion of the exchange project, it became apparent that the women in Bangladesh who comprised the SRGs lacked the capability to establish and manage the community hospital. Consequently, ASPADA made the decision to focus on capacity building for the targeted SRG members in areas such as leadership development, financial management, knowledge enhancement, group operations, health, and nutrition which is continuing from 2019. Amidst the pandemic, the motivation within the SRGs experienced a downward trend. However, the project's timely support during this critical period helped restore their confidence, and since 2022, efforts have been underway to nurture the capacity building of all SRGs. Consequently, due to the displacement of many individuals, some SRGs were affected, leading to a reorganization in 2024. This initiative has evolved into the Health Cooperative Project of ASPADA.

Aim of the Project: The goal of the health cooperative project is to establish a cooperative-based hospital, wherein members hold shares. This hospital will operate as a social enterprise, managed and utilized by its members, with profits benefiting the members. Indeed, such a cooperative-based hospital model could provide an effective healthcare solution for the impoverished population.



Figure 12: Health Cooperative Meeting

Activities Implemented: To enhance the capacity and knowledge of SRG members and their leaders in managing a cooperative and hospital, the project has implemented group-based sessions covering various topics, leadership training, on-the-spot coaching in financial management, yard meetings, SRG network meetings, training workshops, health camps, and advocacy meetings, among others. Additionally, the project has provided preventive healthcare support to SRG members through static and satellite clinics.

Challenges and Lessons Learned:

- One of the primary challenges faced by the project revolves around the development of women's leadership skills to effectively manage a cooperative and handle the necessary documentation for registration.
- Additionally, the project encounters difficulties in managing savings and operating health microfinance among group members. This challenge stems from the need for meticulous documentation to ensure transparency in handling public funds, an area where many group leaders lack proficiency, thereby impacting the sustainability of cooperatives or groups.
- The organization faces constraints in providing adequate support to the project due to limited human resources. Conversely, there is a scarcity of competent women available to offer voluntary assistance. Moreover, self-reliance groups (SRGs) struggle to recruit paid managers to oversee their group finances.
- Social norms, customs, and conflicts within the community have a direct or indirect influence on group activities, posing further challenges to the project's success.
- A significant lesson learned from the project is the importance of recognizing that those with limited resources and capabilities are often eager to maintain them but may lack the capacity to effectively manage groups or finances.

Measurable Impact: The notable impacts are listed below:

- Each of the SRGs has deposited a significant amount of savings.
- The capacity of SRG members and leaders is improving day by day. I
- Most of the SRGs have gained the necessary capacity to manage their group financials.
- SRGs are willing to form a cooperative and hospital for their well-being and income generation.

4. BD Rural WASH for Human Capital Development Project

Project Duration	July 2022 to June 2026
Donor	World Bank and PKSf
Approved Funds	BDT 6000000 per year

Overview of the Project: Access to safely managed water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities is a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable development. While Bangladesh has made considerable progress in economic growth, the lack of adequate WASH services in rural areas remains a pressing concern.

Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG-6) aims to tackle challenges related to safe drinking water, sanitation, hygiene, and the sustainability of water-related ecosystems. In alignment with this goal, PKSf has adopted a demand-driven approach to promote hygienic sanitation through dedicated lending instruments.

As a partner organization of PKSf, ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan Foundation has been implementing WASH-related interventions across five upazilas, Bhaluka, Trisal, Fulbaria, Gouripur, and Muktagacha in the Mymensingh district. ASPADA's primary responsibility is to serve as the regional coordinator, facilitating collaboration with other implementing partners.

Despite being a poverty-prone region with low literacy rates and limited social awareness, Mymensingh continues to face widespread challenges in sanitation coverage. Addressing these issues is critical for public health and human capital development.

The Bangladesh Rural Water, Sanitation & Hygiene for Human Capital Development (BD Rural WASH for HCD) Project jointly funded by the Government of Bangladesh, the World Bank, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), is designed to improve access to safely managed water and sanitation services in targeted rural communities. In addition, the project aims to strengthen institutional capacity for delivering sustainable water and sanitation solutions.

Aim of the Project: The aim of the project is twofold:

Improving Access to Safely Managed Water Supply and Sanitation: The project endeavors to enhance access to safely managed water supply and sanitation facilities in selected rural areas of Mymensingh. This involves initiatives such as constructing water supply systems, installing hygienic toilets, and implementing sanitation infrastructure to ensure that communities have reliable access to clean water

and proper sanitation facilities. By improving access to these essential services, the project aims to contribute to the overall health and well-being of rural populations while also addressing issues related to waterborne diseases and poor hygiene practices.

Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Water and Sanitation Services: In addition to infrastructure development, the project aims to strengthen the institutional capacity of relevant organizations involved in providing water and sanitation services. This involves building the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary for effective planning, management, and maintenance of water supply and sanitation systems. By improving the capacity of institutions such as government agencies, NGOs, and community-based organizations, the project aims to ensure the sustainability and long-term success of water and sanitation interventions in rural Bangladesh.

Activity Implemented: In order to improve access to safe water and hygiene, the project has implemented the following activities:

1. Household Water Loan: Providing loans to households to facilitate access to safe water sources, such as installing water filtration systems or constructing wells.
2. Household Sanitation Loan: Offering loans to households to improve sanitation facilities, including constructing or upgrading toilets and sanitation infrastructure.
3. Incentives for Installing Twin-Pit Toilets: Providing incentives (BDT 3000/toilet) to encourage households to install twin-pit toilets, which are environmentally friendly and contribute to improved sanitation practices.
4. Water and Sanitation Market Development Loan for Entrepreneurs: Extending loans to entrepreneurs to support the development of businesses related to water and sanitation, such as manufacturing or selling water purification devices and sanitation products.
5. Hygiene Market Development for Women Local Entrepreneurs: Supporting women entrepreneurs in developing businesses focused on promoting hygiene practices, including the promotion of sanitary napkins,
6. Behavior Change Communication (BCC) campaigns to raise awareness about hygiene and sanitation.



Figure 13: Project supported water and hygiene facility.

Challenges and Lesson Learned: Certainly, here are a couple of challenges and lessons learned from the implementation of the activities:

Challenges:

1. **Financial Accessibility:** Despite offering household water and sanitation loans, some communities may still struggle to access these financial resources due to factors such as limited awareness or complex application processes.
2. **Behavior Change:** Encouraging households to adopt improved sanitation practices, such as installing twin-pit toilets, can be challenging due to deeply ingrained habits and cultural preferences for traditional sanitation methods.

Lessons Learned:

1. **Community Engagement:** Active involvement of community members in project planning and implementation is crucial for success. Engaging local leaders and residents from the outset helps ensure that interventions are tailored to the specific needs and preferences of the community.
2. **Holistic Approach:** Addressing water and sanitation challenges requires a multifaceted approach that goes beyond infrastructure development. Integrating behavior change communication and hygiene promotion activities alongside infrastructure projects enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions.

Measuring Impact: The so far notable impact the project is as follows.

1. **Improved Access:** Households that receive water and sanitation loans experience immediate improvements in access to safe water sources and upgraded sanitation facilities, leading to enhanced hygiene practices and reduced exposure to waterborne diseases.
2. **Economic Empowerment:** Entrepreneurs who benefit from market development loans capitalize on new business opportunities in the water, sanitation, and hygiene sectors, stimulating local economic growth and creating employment opportunities within the community.

5. Training Building Capacity to Integrate Smaller Microfinance Partners through BURO project.

Project Duration	July 2023 to April 2026
Donor	Water.org and BURO
Approved Funds	BDT 3000000 per year

Overview of the Project: ASPADA, in collaboration with Water.org and Buro Bangladesh, is executing a water credit project aimed at improving access to safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene in underserved communities. This initiative targets the Fulbaria, Gouripur, and Bhaluka Upazilas of Mymensingh district; Sonargoan, Rupgonj, and Bandor Upazilas of Narayanganj district; Monohardi Upazila of Narsingdi district; and Kotiadi Upazila of Kishoreganj district since July 2023. Recognizing the significance of safe water, sanitation, and hygiene for human well-being and sustainable development, particularly in light of global environmental dynamics and climate change, this project aligns with the goals outlined in SDG 6.



Figure 14: Inception of Water credit adoption project

In today's world, water bodies are increasingly contaminated, leading to a significant portion of the population experiencing challenges in accessing safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities. This situation has profound implications for human health and productivity. Recognizing these global challenges, Water.org has extended its support to projects in Bangladesh aimed at mitigating the anticipated hardships and improving access to clean water and sanitation.

Aim of the Project: The objective of the project is to enhance the capacity of microfinance teams in adopting water credit initiatives and to introduce water products as loan offerings, aligning with current environmental requirements.

Activity Implemented: The project conducted Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions for ASPADA's microfinance team (40 staffs), who then imparted training to Credit Officers (COs) on adopting water credit programs. Furthermore, trained COs provided technical assistance to their peers to expand the number of

water loan recipients. During weekly meetings with beneficiaries, each CO emphasized the significance of safe drinking water, hygiene, and sanitation, along with the organization's offerings. This initiative also played a pivotal role in raising awareness among the targeted population on these critical issues.

Challenges and Lesson Learned: Here are some challenges and lessons learned from the water credit adoption project.

Challenges:

- Ensuring effective training and capacity building for microfinance team members and Credit Officers can be challenging, particularly in areas where access to resources and educational opportunities may be limited.
- Providing ongoing technical support to Credit Officers to assist them in effectively promoting and implementing water credit programs requires dedicated resources and expertise.
- Encouraging communities to adopt new practices related to water, hygiene, and sanitation may face resistance due to cultural norms, habits, and beliefs, requiring tailored approaches and sustained efforts.

Lessons Learned:

- Collaborating with local organizations, community leaders, and stakeholders is essential for the success and sustainability of water credit programs, as it helps ensure buy-in, local ownership, and long-term impact.
- Involving communities in project design, implementation, and decision-making processes fosters a sense of ownership and empowers them to actively participate in and support water and sanitation initiatives.
- Ongoing education and awareness-raising efforts are crucial for promoting behavior change and sustaining the impact of water credit programs over time. Regular communication and engagement with stakeholders help reinforce key messages and build trust within communities.

Measuring Impact:

- The project's training sessions and awareness campaigns have led to an immediate increase in knowledge and awareness among community members about the importance of safe drinking water, hygiene practices, and sanitation.
- The Training of Trainers (ToT) and subsequent training of Credit Officers (COs) have strengthened the capacity of ASPADA's microfinance team, enabling them to effectively promote and implement water credit programs within their communities.
- Weekly issue meetings conducted by COs have fostered regular communication and engagement with community members, resulting in increased participation and support for the project's objectives.

Notable Healthcare Service Provided by the Organization

Preventive Health Care

The organization believes “Prevention is better than Cure”, therefore arranges preventive health care service for the poor target community. Health seeking behavior of a society drives by the socio-economic condition and customs which is still poor in Bangladesh from which the poor population have been suffering. At the primary stage of any disease, very few people meet appropriate medical professionals but when it becomes complex then willing to meet a doctor when it requires specialized medical care. Therefore, aiming to improve health seeking behavior of the target community ASPADA implemented scores of preventive health care activities through donor funds and its own funds.



Figure 15: Awareness building session conducted with women groups on healthy living

PKSF funded ENRICH project, Norec funded strengthening partnership project, RDA supported climate change adaptation project, and its own funded microfinance programme has been providing preventive health care service through counselling, group meeting, yard meeting, role playing, workshop, seminar, rally, day observation, etc. to the target community. Most of the activities aimed to improve health consciousness building on good health and healthy practices, personal hygiene, water and sanitation, nutrition, family planning, reproductive health etc.

Curative Health Care

As a least developed country, Bangladesh faces challenges in providing comprehensive curative healthcare services to its vast population, resulting in overall inadequacy compared to the population size. Moreover, the Mymensingh division, characterized by poverty, hosts most of our implemented projects.

While the government has extended curative healthcare services up to the ward level through community clinics, the provided services are often insufficient, leading to a lack of trust among the general population. Furthermore, the behavior and care exhibited by service providers towards the poor are often unsatisfactory, discouraging many from seeking care at government facilities. Conversely, healthcare services in private facilities are prohibitively expensive for the impoverished.

Recognizing these local healthcare challenges, ASPADA has launched curative healthcare initiatives for underserved populations, particularly focusing on women and children, who often face neglect due to patriarchal societal norms. Projects supported by PKSF have established five Primary Health Care Centers (PHCCs) in the Bhaluka Upazila, while initiatives funded by NOREC have introduced effective solution-based approaches to curative healthcare. Additionally, projects funded by Norec have integrated nutritional counseling services into satellite and static clinics. Periodic health camps, supported by the Lions Club, have provided essential healthcare services to the poor, complementing ASPADA's embedded curative healthcare facilities.



Figure 16: ASPADA staff providing curative health care service in static clinic

Through these diverse projects and activities, ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan Foundation continues to deliver curative healthcare services to impoverished populations, addressing critical gaps in access to healthcare.

Safe motherhood promotion and advocacy

While Bangladesh has made significant strides in improving maternal health outcomes, rural areas continue to face challenges regarding safe motherhood and institutional deliveries. Recognizing this issue, our organization has prioritized it across multiple healthcare projects. Our objectives include enhancing clinical standards in maternal health, with active involvement from local healthcare providers such as midwives and village doctors in training and monitoring activities. Additionally, reproductive health messages are disseminated in schools and other public areas to raise awareness.

Through SRGs, static clinics, satellite clinics, and community clinics, ASPADA provides antenatal and postnatal care services and takes necessary steps to ensure safe motherhood. We now actively encourage pregnant women to opt for institutional deliveries and emphasize the importance of postnatal care, activities that are also promoted through women's group initiatives.



Figure 17: ASPADA health visitor conducting women group meeting on safe motherhood

Nutritional counselling

In present-day Bangladesh, malnutrition remains a significant public health concern among mothers and children. Addressing this issue, our maternal and child nutrition program in the Mymensingh is actively working to bring about positive change. The program concentrates on the management of preventive and curative health services for moderate malnutrition across five weekly community-based outpatient clinics.

Children and lactating women identified as malnourished receive essential training on addressing this issue. Additionally, paid and trained health volunteers offer nutritional guidance, particularly targeting women, children, and elderly individuals. Furthermore, we advocate for agro production-based nutrition services, notably through the establishment of kitchen gardens featuring local varieties. This initiative ensures the availability of nutritious food daily without incurring additional costs. Moreover, we have integrated nutritional counseling services into our core health program.

Additionally, the ENSR project has incorporated nutritional counseling into both clinical and community settings, leveraging the expertise of foreign national employees and nutritionists. Nutrition officers regularly visit satellite and static clinics attended by pregnant women, lactating mothers, and adolescents, providing vital nutritional counseling services during doctor appointments at regular intervals.



Figure 18: nutritional counselling to lactating mother

Water and Sanitation

We are actively supporting water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) activities both in schools and communities, aiming to enhance health outcomes by mitigating water and sanitation-related risks. With over 95% of our members now utilizing sanitary latrines and the majority having access to arsenic-free tube wells, we have observed a significant reduction in diarrheal diseases. Additionally, these projects promote WASH practices at the household level, as well as in schools and community settings, through the engagement of health volunteers.

As part of our efforts to improve sanitation, the project has distributed 200 sanitary latrine ring-slabs to impoverished beneficiaries. Furthermore, we have established 6 tube wells and 9 sanitary latrines in local institutions such as schools, madrasas, and mosques. Health volunteers actively promote rural WASH through regular home visits, where they raise awareness through yard meetings and facilitate hands-on demonstrations.

Similarly, our climate change adaptation project ensures access to drinking water for approximately 300 households while also enhancing sanitation facilities. Additionally, the project organizes two WASH awareness events and encourages practical implementation of these principles.

Reproductive Health

The organization has been delivering reproductive health services through both static and satellite clinics as part of the ENRICH project and the Health Cooperative project. Additionally, the ENSR project and PRISE project have been offering support for adolescent development through provisions for healthcare and skill development. This is facilitated by a network of health professionals, volunteers, and trained health workers. Engaging in various projects and studies in this domain, our aim is to ensure that young children receive the optimal start in life.



Figure 19: Adolescents are participating in the ASPADA reproductive health session

Within these primary healthcare initiatives, ASPADA has administered reproductive health care to the targeted community. The organization has spearheaded peer group discussions addressing topics such as menstrual hygiene, safe sexual practices, and rights awareness. Approximately 1000 adolescents have actively participated in these reproductive health events.

Geriatric Care

The Elderly Care Project, supported by PKSf, aims to ensure the overall well-being, both physical and mental, of the elderly population residing in the targeted area while also fostering increased social cohesion. Currently, 198 individuals aged 60 years and above are directly involved in the project.

Project activities encompass a range of interventions, including group discussions to address stress and other issues, regular health check-ups at satellite clinics, distribution of assistive aids such as walking sticks, hearing aids, eyeglasses, and raised toilet seats, provision of recreational spaces, nutritional guidance, participation in local development planning, organizing periodic events to uplift spirits, distribution of elderly allowances, raising awareness on contemporary issues, and advocating for their rights and entitlements.

The project has established nine groups at the ward level and one group at the union level, with regular monthly meetings held for members to convene. Additionally, the project provides a monthly elderly allowance of Tk. 500 to 100 selected individuals facing financial hardship.

Moreover, recreational facilities tailored to the needs of elderly individuals are available in each area, providing them with opportunities for enjoyment and social interaction, akin to a club setting. Furthermore, the project extended funeral support to elderly individuals in need.



Figure 20: Health check-up of elderly people

AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS

The importance of agricultural development in Bangladesh cannot be overstated, as it serves as the backbone of the country's economy and plays a crucial role in ensuring food security, poverty alleviation, and rural livelihoods. Agriculture employs a significant portion of the population, particularly in rural areas, and contributes substantially to the country's GDP. Bangladesh's fertile land, favorable climate, and abundant water resources provide an ideal environment for agricultural production. The sector not only fulfills domestic food requirements but also generates surplus crops for export, contributing to foreign exchange earnings. Furthermore, agricultural development promotes inclusive growth by empowering smallholder farmers, enhancing their productivity, and improving their socio-economic status. Sustainable agricultural practices, technological advancements, and infrastructure investments are essential for ensuring the resilience and long-term viability of Bangladesh's agriculture sector in the face of challenges such as climate change, land degradation, and population growth.

6. Cooperative Based Agricultural Development Program

Project Duration	January 2022 to continue
Donor	Own fund
Approved Funds	BDT 1000000 per year

Overview of the Project: The organization strongly believes that Bangladesh could ensure its sustainable development by aligning agricultural development with national progress, as agriculture serves as the foundation of our country. ASPADA (Agroforestry Seed Production and Development Association) has emerged with a vision of agricultural development as a pivotal driver for rural livelihoods and national advancement.



Figure 21: Farmers meeting on agricultural cooperative

Marginal farmers are facing challenges such as a lack of quality inputs, insufficient knowledge of modern production systems, low prices for post-harvest processed products, packaging, and marketing issues. Additionally, absentee landlords and farming practices led by individuals with limited knowledge of modern agriculture exacerbate these challenges. Furthermore, the adverse effects of climate change continue to impact agricultural production.

To foster profitable agriculture, the integration of mechanization, the application of the latest technologies, and cooperative-based production and marketing are essential. In light of these challenges, the project aims to enhance agricultural profitability by introducing mechanization and cooperative-based production systems. Through this initiative, each farmer is expected to earn 15-20 lakh taka over two years from 2.5 acres of land as net profit, which constitutes an innovative aspect of this project.

Aim of the Project: The objective of the project is enumerated below.

- Establishing a state-of-the-art agricultural technology demonstration village equipped with a farmer training facility, serving as a comprehensive farming solution center.
- Enhancing farmers' knowledge and proficiency in modern agricultural technology, mechanization, and cooperative-based production systems to foster advanced producer groups.
- Transitioning traditional agriculture into a lucrative commercial enterprise.
- Enhancing food security including nutritional security and livelihoods of farmers' households.
- Developing robust value chains for crops, livestock and fisheries including the enhancement of marketing systems towards foreign market.



Figure 22: Farmer's transplanting rice seedling under agricultural cooperative

Activities Implemented:

- **Farmers Group Formation:** Organizing farmers into groups of around 50 individuals each facilitates collective action, knowledge sharing, and resource pooling, fostering a sense of community and cooperation among participants. At present, the project oversees the management of six farmers' groups. Upon their maturation, the project will facilitate the registration of an Agricultural Cooperative.
- **Collection of High-Yielding Crop Seeds and Seedlings:** Collaborating with national-level agricultural research organizations such as BRRI, BARI, BINA, and BADC allows farmers to access high-quality seeds and seedlings of improved crop varieties. These varieties are bred for higher yields, disease resistance, and other desirable traits, enabling farmers to enhance productivity and profitability in their agricultural ventures.
- **Seed and Seedling Production:** Establishing seed and seedling production facilities within technology demonstration village ensures access to high-quality seeds and seedlings for rice and vegetable cultivation, thereby improving crop yields and quality.
- **Arrangement of Agricultural Machinery:** Providing essential agricultural machinery such as tractors, power tillers, combine harvesters, and trolleys to each farmers' group enhances mechanization and efficiency in farm operations, reducing labor requirements and increasing productivity.
- **Technical Support:** Deploying agriculture graduates to provide technical assistance and advisory services to farmers enhances their knowledge and skills in modern agricultural practices, leading to improved crop management and higher yields.
- **Livestock Provision:** Providing farmers with milking cows and calves supports livestock rearing activities, diversifies income sources, and enhances household nutrition and food security.
- **Veterinary Services:** Offering veterinary services ensures the health and well-being of livestock, reducing the risk of disease outbreaks and improving the productivity and profitability of livestock farming.
- **Household Compost Production:** Training farmers in household compost production using *Trichoderma* Sp. promotes organic farming practices, reduces dependency on chemical fertilizers, and improves soil fertility and health.
- **Seasonal Vegetable Cultivation:** Encouraging farmers to cultivate seasonal vegetables using compost enhances dietary diversity, household nutrition, and income generation opportunities.
- **Crop-Specific Training:** Providing tailored training sessions to farmers on specific crop production techniques, pest and disease management, and post-harvest handling practices improves their agricultural knowledge and skills.
- **Improved Grass Cultivation:** Promoting the cultivation of improved grass varieties in fallow lands enhances fodder availability for livestock, supports sustainable grazing practices, and improves livestock productivity.
- **Fish Cultivation:** Encouraging fish cultivation in household small ponds diversifies income sources, improves household nutrition, and utilizes available water resources efficiently.
- **Homestead Vegetable Cultivation:** Promoting vegetable cultivation in homesteads maximizes land utilization, improves household food security, and provides additional income opportunities for farmers.
- **Collective Market System Development:** Establishing a collective market system enables farmers' groups to aggregate their produce, negotiate better prices, and access larger markets. This approach enhances market efficiency, reduces transaction costs, and improves farmers' bargaining power.

- **Direct Selling to Bulk Traders:** Facilitating direct selling arrangements between farmers' groups and bulk traders' bypasses intermediaries, ensuring fair prices for farmers and enabling them to capture a larger share of the value chain. This direct link strengthens market connections, fosters trust between producers and buyers, and promotes transparent and equitable trade practices.

Challenges and Lesson Learned: Challenges and lesson learned is enumerated below.

- Managing group dynamics within the farmers' groups may pose challenges, as differences in opinions, leadership styles, and decision-making processes could arise, potentially affecting the efficiency and cohesion of the groups.
- Ensuring equitable access to resources such as agricultural machinery, seeds, and technical support for all farmers within the groups may be challenging, particularly in cases of limited availability or uneven distribution of resources.
- Establishing effective market linkages and negotiating fair prices for farmers' produce may be challenging, especially in areas where markets are fragmented or dominated by middlemen who exploit farmers.
- Building the technical knowledge and skills of farmers, particularly in adopting new agricultural practices or technologies, may face resistance or require ongoing support and training to overcome barriers to adoption.
- Climate variability and extreme weather events can impact agricultural productivity and livelihoods, posing challenges for crop management, water resource management, and overall farm resilience.
- Navigating regulatory requirements and bureaucratic processes for registering and formalizing the Agricultural Cooperative may be time-consuming and complex, requiring expertise and legal support.
- Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the project activities beyond the project duration may be challenging, particularly in securing ongoing funding, maintaining community engagement, and sustaining the impact of interventions over time.

Measuring Impact: The short-term impact of the project are as follows.

- **Increased Farmer Productivity:** Through access to resources such as agricultural machinery, improved seeds, and technical support, farmers are expected to experience an immediate increase in productivity, leading to higher crop yields and improved livelihoods in the short term.
- **Enhanced Community Cohesion:** The formation of farmers' groups and the establishment of collective market systems foster a sense of community and cooperation among participants, promoting social cohesion and collective action for shared goals in the short term.

7. Foundation Rice Seed Production Project

Project Overview: In collaboration with Square Agro Development and Processing Limited, ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan Foundation has undertaken the cultivation of rice foundation seed production from breeder seed. Initially, our plan was to produce rice seed on a 100-acre plot of land. However, due to irrigation complexities on ASPADA's land, we had to adjust our cultivation area to 38 acres in the Bhaluka Upazila of Mymensingh district.

During the boro season, we cultivated BRRI dhan 89 and BRRI dhan 92, and collected breeder seed from the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI). This project marks the first time our organization has embarked on such an initiative, primarily aimed at benefiting our contract growers. The goal is to ensure the availability of high-quality inbred rice seed in the local market and supply it to the targeted farmer beneficiaries of ASPADA.

ASPADA's mission involves promoting mechanized and commercial agriculture through the introduction of modern technology in rice production. To maintain seed quality throughout the production cycle, dedicated agricultural graduates and diploma agriculturists have provided technical support.



Figure 23: Seed bed Preparation

Additionally, the Seed Certification Agency conducted visits to the fields during the flowering stage, offering suggestions to uphold the high quality of the produced seed. This comprehensive approach underscores our commitment to fostering sustainable agricultural practices and ensuring the provision of superior quality seeds to farmers.

Aim of the Project: The primary objective of the project is.

- i. To promote the adoption of mechanized and commercial rice production systems through the utilization of modern technology.
- ii. To enhance the knowledge and capacity of producer groups through targeted training and skill-building initiatives.
- iii. To guarantee the availability of high-quality rice seed in the local market, thereby supporting sustainable agricultural practices and ensuring food security.

Challenges and Lesson Learned:

Challenges:

- The project encountered challenges stemming from unpredictable and extreme weather conditions.
- Adequate irrigation proved to be a significant challenge, particularly due to complexities in the existing irrigation infrastructure.
- The presence of diseases and pests, notably monkey infestation, posed a considerable threat to the project's success.

Lesson Learned:

- Recognizing the inconsistency of weather patterns, the project learned to exercise heightened vigilance against pest and disease infestations. Continuous surveillance measures were implemented to mitigate potential risks and ensure the project's resilience in the face of weather-related challenges.

Measuring Impact: As the reporting period concluded, the boro season commenced, delaying the harvest of rice and the determination of final yields. Nonetheless, the standing rice fields exhibit promising growth, leading us to anticipate that the production of rice foundation seed will meet our expectations. The Seed Certification Agency (SCA) officer expressed satisfaction upon visiting the fields and anticipated a favorable yield outcome.



Figure 24: Farmers are doing intercultural operation in the rice field

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

Protecting the climate and ensuring sound environmental management remain critical for the well-being of both present and future generations. In 2024, the effects of climate change, rising temperatures, sea-level rise, extreme weather events, and biodiversity loss, continued to pose serious threats to ecological stability and human livelihoods. Addressing these complex challenges requires coordinated and sustained efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while simultaneously building resilience to climate impacts.

Environmental management plays a vital role in sustaining the ecosystems that underpin human life. Key priorities include conserving natural resources, promoting sustainable land use, and preserving biodiversity. These efforts ensure the continued provision of essential ecosystem services such as clean air and water, fertile soil, climate regulation, and pollination of crops. Notably, environmental degradation disproportionately affects marginalized populations, intensifying existing social and economic inequalities.

In 2024, proactive climate and environmental measures demonstrated wide-ranging benefits beyond emissions reduction. Investments in renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies contributed to reduced carbon footprints, generated employment, boosted local economies, and enhanced energy security. Similarly, promotion of sustainable agricultural practices, including organic farming, crop diversification, and agroforestry, helped sequester carbon, improved soil fertility, optimized water use, and supported biodiversity conservation.

Restoration of degraded ecosystems and protection of natural habitats continued to be critical components of climate action. These initiatives not only captured carbon and supported climate adaptation but also preserved wildlife habitats, enhanced local livelihoods, and enriched recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities.

Biodiversity Conservation in Mymensingh Region

The Mymensingh region is home to rich biodiversity and ecologically diverse landscapes, including wetlands, forests, floodplains, hills, and agricultural zones. These ecosystems support a wide variety of plant and animal species some of which are endemic or endangered and provide essential ecological services such as water purification, pest regulation, and crop pollination.

In 2024, conservation of biodiversity in Mymensingh was prioritized as a means to ensure ecosystem resilience and long-term sustainability. Biodiversity not only underpins ecological health but also supports livelihoods for local communities, particularly those engaged in fishing, forestry, and eco-tourism. Furthermore, the region's biodiversity holds cultural and scientific significance, offering valuable opportunities for research, environmental education, and nature-based tourism.

Efforts to conserve biodiversity in Mymensingh contribute directly to the goals of sustainable development, climate resilience, and intergenerational equity. By safeguarding the region's natural heritage, we lay the foundation for a healthier environment, more inclusive growth, and a more resilient society.

8. Safe Water Supply, Sanitation and Biogas technology for rural livelihood Improvement in Climate Victim People of Bangladesh

Overview of the Project: The project titled "Safe Water Supply, Sanitation, and Biogas Technology for Rural Livelihood Improvement in Climate-Affected Communities of Bangladesh" has been operational since 2012 and continues its activities until 2026 in Bhaluka Upazila of Mymensingh and Sadar Upazila of Jamalpur district. The project activities include the establishment of deep tube wells (100-150 cubic meters/hour), overhead tanks (capacity 30,000 liters), subsurface irrigation channels, drinking water supply networks (10,000 ft), community biogas plants (capacity 83 cubic meters), and solar energy technology (510 watts), among others, to enhance infrastructure development. Additionally, it provides equipment support such as power tillers, weeders, sprayers, threshers, and gas-operated generators to facilitate smooth crop cultivation.

As a result of adverse climate change impacts, the project area has experienced a gradual decline in water levels, leading to shortages of irrigation and drinking water. This has hindered farm production and affected households' access to clean water and cooking fuel.

Activities Implemented: Through project implementation, 600 households now have access to pure drinking water, 200 acres of land have been brought under year-round irrigation, and 10 households have received cooking gas supply and solar power. Moreover, the project has created opportunities for rural residents to engage in income-generating activities through training in irrigation techniques, poultry and livestock rearing, compost production, biogas marketing, horticultural nursery development, and food processing and preservation. Overall, the project has contributed to improving energy efficiency, enhancing climate change adaptation, reducing CO₂ emissions, and enhancing the lives and livelihoods of impoverished communities through employment generation and poverty reduction, ensuring sustainable community development.

Aim of the Project: Its primary objective is to provide climate-resilient technology and awareness to farmer households in vulnerable communities, enabling them to adapt their livelihoods to adverse climatic conditions.

Challenges and Lesson Learned:

Challenges:

- Adapting to climate change poses significant challenges, especially in vulnerable communities where adverse weather patterns can disrupt agricultural activities and water availability, affecting livelihoods and food security.
- Ensuring the sustainable operation and maintenance of infrastructure such as tube wells, overhead tanks, and irrigation channels can be challenging due to limited resources, technical capacity, and community ownership, leading to potential breakdowns and service interruptions.

- Promoting the adoption of new technologies and practices, such as biogas plants and solar energy, requires overcoming resistance to change and building awareness and trust among community members, which can be time-consuming and resource intensive.
- Ensuring meaningful participation and ownership of project activities by local communities is essential for sustainability but can be challenging to achieve, especially in contexts where power dynamics, social hierarchies, and conflicting interests may impede inclusive decision-making and participation.

Lessons Learned:

- Engaging local communities from project inception through participatory approaches fosters ownership, builds trust, and ensures that interventions are tailored to local needs and priorities, enhancing sustainability and impact.
- Investing in capacity building and skill development among project beneficiaries and local stakeholders strengthens their ability to manage and maintain project assets, fosters entrepreneurship, and enhances resilience to climate change and other challenges.
- Collaborating with diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, research institutions, and private sector actors, enhances project effectiveness, leverages resources, and broadens the reach and impact of interventions.
- Facilitating knowledge exchange and learning among project stakeholders, including farmers, extension workers, and policymakers, fosters innovation, promotes best practices, and enables scaling up of successful interventions, maximizing project impact and sustainability.



Figure 25: Established deep-tubewell for round the year irrigation and household water supply

Measuring Impact:

- Through the establishment of deep tube wells and drinking water supply networks, the project ensures that 600 households gain immediate access to pure drinking water, mitigating health risks associated with contaminated water sources.
- Provision of equipment support such as power tillers and irrigation infrastructure enable 200 acres of land to be brought under year-round irrigation, leading to an immediate increase in crop yields and food security for participating households.

- By providing cooking gas supply and solar power to 10 households, the project enhances household energy access and reduces reliance on traditional fuel sources, freeing up resources for other essential needs and improving overall quality of life.

Notable Environmental Service Provided by the Organization

Environmental protection initiatives tailored to the specific contexts of Mymensingh, Gazipur, and Tangail districts play a crucial role in addressing local environmental challenges and promoting sustainable development. In Mymensingh, where agriculture is a primary economic activity, promoting agroforestry practices can significantly contribute to soil conservation, enhance crop productivity, and mitigate the impacts of climate change. By integrating trees into agricultural landscapes, farmers can diversify their income sources, improve soil fertility, and reduce erosion, thus ensuring the long-term sustainability of farming practices while preserving the region's natural resources.

In Gazipur, home to numerous industrial zones and factories, raising awareness about industrial pollution is paramount to safeguarding the environment and public health. Efforts to educate industries about the importance of adopting cleaner production techniques, implementing effective waste management strategies, and complying with environmental regulations are essential to mitigate the adverse impacts of industrial activities on air, water, and soil quality. By fostering a culture of environmental responsibility among businesses and encouraging the adoption of sustainable practices, Gazipur can achieve economic growth without compromising its environmental integrity.

Similarly, in Tangail district, where deforestation and habitat degradation are pressing concerns, tree plantation initiatives can play a vital role in restoring ecosystems, preserving biodiversity, and mitigating climate change impacts. By engaging local communities in tree planting campaigns and promoting the sustainable management of forest resources, Tangail can enhance its resilience to environmental threats while improving livelihoods and promoting eco-tourism opportunities. Additionally, raising awareness about the importance of protecting natural habitats, conserving water resources, and reducing pollution can empower residents to become stewards of their environment, contributing to the long-term sustainability and well-being of the district.

Environmental Protection: Environmental protection lies at the heart of ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan Foundation's mission, reflecting its unwavering commitment to safeguarding the planet for future generations. Recognizing the critical importance of environmental conservation, ASPADA ensures that it permeates through all facets of the organization's work, serving as a fundamental principle guiding its activities and initiatives. This holistic approach underscores ASPADA's understanding that environmental well-being is intricately linked to human welfare and sustainable development.

ASPADA's dedication to environmental protection manifests in a myriad of ways, with a diverse range of programs and activities aimed at raising awareness and fostering positive change. Regular initiatives such as awareness creation campaigns and observance of environmental days serve to educate communities and stakeholders about pressing environmental issues and the importance of conservation efforts. By engaging individuals and communities in dialogue and action, ASPADA empowers them to become active participants in environmental stewardship, driving collective efforts towards a greener and more sustainable future.

Moreover, ASPADA's proactive stance on environmental protection is exemplified through its hands-on approach to conservation activities. From organizing workshops and rallies to conducting tree plantations in public areas and promoting nurseries and social forestry, ASPADA actively engages in on-the-ground initiatives aimed at enhancing biodiversity, mitigating climate change, and promoting sustainable land management practices. By focusing on grassroots-level interventions such as tree plantation campaigns in homesteads and fallow lands, ASPADA not only contributes to environmental restoration but also fosters community ownership and resilience, laying the groundwork for a more harmonious relationship between humanity and nature.



Figure 26: ED ASPADA distributing tree sapling among students

Renewable Energy: Renewable energy stands at the forefront of ASPADA's advocacy efforts, reflecting the organization's deep commitment to sustainable development. ASPADA places a strong emphasis on the promotion and utilization of renewable energy sources, particularly in rural and remote areas where access to electricity is limited or non-existent. Through initiatives like solar energy deployment and biogas technology adoption, ASPADA strives to address energy poverty while mitigating carbon emissions and environmental degradation.

In its pursuit of renewable energy promotion, ASPADA integrates advocacy and environmental education into its organizational framework. During weekly meetings of microfinance groups, community organizers discuss the manifold benefits of solar energy and biogas plants, providing crucial information on how

members can access and benefit from these technologies. By empowering communities with knowledge and resources, ASPADA facilitates the adoption of renewable energy solutions, improving livelihoods and environmental sustainability in the process.

Moreover, ASPADA recognizes that environmental protection is integral to its mission and operations. As such, the organization systematically incorporates environmental considerations into its planning processes, ensuring that activities and interventions are designed to minimize adverse impacts and maximize positive outcomes for ecosystems and communities alike. Through workshops and training programs, ASPADA equips its staff members with the tools and expertise needed to effectively promote renewable energy and integrate environmental considerations into their work, thus advancing the organization's overarching goal of sustainable development.

Environmental Movement (Paribesh Andolon): ASPADA's collaboration with Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA) represents a significant step forward in its commitment to environmental advocacy and action. As a prominent national body for the environmental movement in Bangladesh, BAPA plays a pivotal role in driving awareness, mobilizing communities, and advocating for policy change on a nationwide scale. By extending its partnership with BAPA, ASPADA harnesses the collective strength and expertise of a well-established network, amplifying its impact and reach in the realm of environmental conservation and activism.

Through its partnership with BAPA, ASPADA demonstrates its unwavering support for the environmental movement in Bangladesh. This collaboration entails active participation in BAPA's diverse range of activities and initiatives, including but not limited to national and international conferences, online environmental education programs, and protesting rallies. By providing financial support for specific causes identified by BAPA, ASPADA not only reinforces its solidarity with the environmental movement but also contributes tangible resources towards advancing shared goals and objectives.

By aligning its efforts with BAPA's nationwide initiatives, ASPADA leverages synergies and fosters collaboration within the environmental sector. Together, ASPADA and BAPA work hand in hand to address pressing environmental challenges, advocate for sustainable policies, and promote public awareness and engagement. Through joint endeavors, they strive to catalyze positive change at both the grassroots and policy levels, ultimately contributing to the collective effort towards building a more resilient, equitable, and environmentally sustainable future for Bangladesh and beyond.

SKILLS BUILDING PROGRAMS

In the context of Bangladesh, where a significant portion of the population relies on agriculture and traditional industries for livelihoods, the importance of skills building programs cannot be overstated. These programs serve as catalysts for socioeconomic development by empowering individuals with the knowledge and abilities needed to thrive in an increasingly competitive global market. With a rapidly evolving economy, characterized by advancements in technology and shifting market demands, there's a pressing need to equip the workforce with relevant skills to adapt and excel. Skills building programs offer avenues for individuals to enhance their proficiency in areas such as digital literacy, vocational trades, and entrepreneurship, thereby expanding employment opportunities and fostering economic growth.

Moreover, in a country like Bangladesh where youth constitute a significant portion of the population, investing in skills building programs is crucial for harnessing the demographic dividend. By providing comprehensive training and development initiatives, these programs not only address the unemployment challenges but also cultivate a skilled workforce capable of driving innovation and productivity across various sectors. Furthermore, skill-building initiatives tailored to the needs of marginalized communities, including women and rural populations, play a pivotal role in promoting inclusivity and reducing socioeconomic disparities. Ultimately, by prioritizing skills development, Bangladesh can unlock its full potential and emerge as a dynamic hub of talent and innovation in the global arena.

9. Partnership Reinforcement for Integrated Skills Enhancement (PRISE) Project

Project Duration	July 2022 to June 2026
Donor	World Bank and PKSF
Approved Funds	BDT 2800000 per year

Overview of the Project: The Partnership Reinforcement for Integrated Skills Enhancement (PRISE) stands as a beacon of hope for the young women in destitute communities, offering them a pathway to empowerment through vocational skill building. Targeting those aged between 15 to 18 years who have dropped out of school, PRISE provides a vital opportunity for them to bolster their capabilities through apprenticeship training, paving the way for future employability.

Operating primarily in the Sadar, Gophorgoan, and Fulbaria upazilas of Mymensingh district, PRISE has carefully selected 150 apprentices to partake in this transformative journey. Collaborating with local employers known as MCP, these apprentices delve into hands-on training, gaining invaluable experience and expertise in various vocational fields.

Notably, PRISE's endeavors are not merely isolated efforts but are intricately woven into the fabric of national skill development policies. By specifically targeting marginalized and disadvantaged populations, PRISE exemplifies a commitment to inclusivity and equity.

Furthermore, PRISE's impact extends beyond individual skill enhancement, aligning closely with broader sustainable development goals. By striving to achieve SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work

and Economic Growth), PRISE not only uplifts the lives of the youth women it serves but also contributes to the holistic development of society.



Figure 27: Young women training on tailoring

Aim of the Project: The objective of the project is to provide skill-building opportunities for destitute young women who have dropped out of school, with the aim of engaging them in productive activities as a means of poverty alleviation and addressing unemployment. Additionally, the project seeks to create employable skills and decent work opportunities for underprivileged youths.

Implemented Activities:

Project Team Composition: Following the signing of the project implementation agreement, the organization initiated the recruitment process for three Community Organizers (CO) to be stationed in three Upazilas. Additionally, a Focal Person was appointed from the internal resource pool.

Learner Selection: Utilizing a baseline survey, the Community Organizers (COs) identified 50 learners from each Upazila, adhering to the project's specified criteria. These learners are young women aged between 15 to 18 years who have recently discontinued their education, come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and express interest in enhancing their skills for either employment or entrepreneurship. In total, 150 learners were selected across the three Upazilas including Person with Disabilities (15%).

MCP Selection: Through a comprehensive market survey conducted in the selected Upazilas, the project identified and selected 75 Micro-Enterprise Coaching Providers (MCPs) from the pool of local entrepreneurs. As per the project's criteria, these MCPs will serve as mentors ('Ostad') in the Ostad-Sagret model, guiding learners in their respective business endeavors. Under the PRISE project, each MCP is paired with two learners ('Sagret') for a period of six months for hands on training. The learners engage in intensive day-long training at the MCP's business entity, five days a week, over the duration of the program.

Peer Leader (PL) and Technical Trainer (TT) Selection: In the selected three Upazilas, the project appointed 3 Peer Leaders (PL) and 12 Technical Trainers (TT) to facilitate weekly theoretical classes on various topics. Throughout the reporting period, these PLs and TTs conducted sessions covering a range of subjects including Health and Personal Hygiene, Personal Safety, Equality, Life Goal Setting, Social and Behavioral Skills, Mental Health Management, Adolescent Health, Family Planning, Combating Child Marriage, Addressing Smoking and Addiction, Human Trafficking Awareness, Introduction to Job Market Dynamics, and Professional Development.



Figure 28: Young women skills building training going on

Trade Selection: In consideration of learners' interests and local availability, the project offers instruction in primarily five trades. Among the 150 learners, 28 are enrolled in Beauty Salon-Female, 38 in IT Support Technician, 52 in Tailoring and Dressmaking-Female, 20 in Tailoring and Dressmaking-Male, and 12 in Block Boutique and Screen-Printing trade.

Hands on Apprenticeship: Within the 10-month project cycle, two months were dedicated to the selection of learners, MCPs, PLs, TTs, etc., through local market surveys. Following this, six months were allocated for hands-on training, while the remaining two months focused on job placement. Each learner participated in hands-on coaching at the MCPs' business entities for a minimum of eight hours per day,

five days a week. Additionally, learners attended theoretical classes conducted by PLs and TTs on soft life skills at the ASPADA office for one day each week. Hands on Apprenticeship in enterprise and institution-based training align with the National Skill Development Policy, focusing on disadvantaged groups and labor migrants.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Throughout the project duration, senior management officials of ASPADA, including the Executive Director, Director of Microfinance, and Director of Programs, along with the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) team and Internal Audit team, monitored project activities. Additionally, the Director provided continuous support to the project focal person to ensure the quality implementation of targeted activities.

Job Placement: As per the project design and agreement, the organization committed to facilitating job placements for 80% of the learners, while the remaining 20% would initiate their own enterprises for self-employment. At the conclusion of the six-month training period, job placements were secured for 100% of the learners either with MCPs or in other positions offering a minimum monthly wage of Tk. 8000.



Figure 29: Beauty salon trainee learning by doing

Challenges and lesson learned:

Challenges:

- Despite efforts to adhere to the project's specified criteria for learner selection, there were difficulties in accurately identifying and verifying eligible learners, leading to potential discrepancies in participant demographics and needs.
- Limited resources and capacity constraints within the organization posed challenges in effectively supporting the training and mentorship activities, potentially affecting the quality and sustainability of the program.
- Ensuring equal access and participation for learners with disabilities presented logistical and resource challenges, requiring additional support and accommodations to facilitate their engagement in the program activities.

Lessons Learned:

- Implementing more efficient and streamlined recruitment processes for project personnel, such as COs, MCPs, PLs, and TTs, can help mitigate delays and ensure timely project implementation.
- Improving outreach strategies and community engagement efforts can facilitate better identification and enrollment of eligible learners, ensuring inclusivity and maximizing program impact.
- Investing in continuous capacity building for project staff and stakeholders, particularly in monitoring and evaluation practices, can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of project interventions.
- Flexibility and adaptability in program design and implementation are essential to address emerging challenges and meet the evolving needs of the target beneficiaries, ensuring the relevance and responsiveness of the project activities.
- Collaborating with local stakeholders, institutions, and organizations can leverage resources and expertise, enhancing the reach and impact of the project while promoting sustainability through shared ownership and collective action.

Measuring Impact:

- Through the project activities, disadvantaged youth, particularly young women and persons with disabilities, gain access to skills training and mentorship opportunities, empowering them with the knowledge and skills necessary for employment or entrepreneurship.
- By participating in hands-on apprenticeship programs and theoretical classes, learners develop practical skills and knowledge in various trades, increasing their employability and income-generating potential in the short term.
- The theoretical classes conducted by Peer Leaders (PLs) and Technical Trainers (TTs) on topics such as health, personal hygiene, and mental health management contribute to the short-term improvement of participants' overall well-being and quality of life.
- Engagement in project activities fosters a sense of community and social cohesion among participants, as they come together to learn and collaborate towards common goals, strengthening social bonds and support networks in the short term.

10. VGD Life Skill Development Project

Project Duration	July 2022 to June 2024
Donor	DWA/WFP
Approved Funds	BDT 2500000 per year

Overview of the Project: The VWB (Vulnerable Women Beneficiary) project, initiated by the Departments of Women Affairs in Bangladesh, aims to address the socio-economic challenges faced by vulnerable women across the country. This multifaceted project encompasses a range of initiatives designed to empower women economically, socially, and politically.

At its core, the VWB project seeks to provide targeted support to women who are particularly vulnerable due to various factors such as poverty, lack of education, social exclusion, or gender-based discrimination. Through various interventions, including skill development programs, access to microfinance, vocational training, and awareness campaigns, the project endeavors to enhance the livelihoods and overall well-being of these women.

A crucial component of the VWB project centers on enhancing the life skills of vulnerable women and involving them in productive endeavors such as income-generating activities and asset acquisition. To kickstart income generation initiatives, ensuring access to credit is paramount, a responsibility that will be fulfilled by the implementing organization, ASPADA.

Additionally, the VWB project places significant emphasis on creating a supportive environment for women, including addressing issues such as gender-based violence and promoting access to essential services like healthcare and education. Through partnerships with local NGOs, government agencies, and community leaders, the project works to build sustainable mechanisms for supporting vulnerable women over the long term.

Since October 2023, ASPADA has been executing the VWB project within the Mohongonj and Modan Upazilas of Netrokona district. Progress during the reporting period has been modest, with advancements primarily in beneficiary identification and group formation. However, it's worth noting that the total target beneficiaries' number 2740, with 1926 located in Mohangonj Upazila and 814 in Modan Upazila.

Aim of the Project: The overarching objective of the VWB (Vulnerable Women Beneficiary) project is to empower vulnerable women by enhancing their socio-economic status through targeted interventions such as skill development, access to income-generating activities, and support for asset acquisition, ultimately fostering their self-reliance and holistic well-being.

Activities Implemented: So far, the project has implemented following activities.

- **Project Team Composition:** The project team consists of a project manager responsible for overseeing the entire VWB project and two community organizers tasked with facilitating on-the-ground activities and liaising with beneficiaries. The project manager provides strategic direction, coordinates activities, and ensures alignment with project objectives, while the community organizers work closely with beneficiaries, supporting them in accessing project resources and services.

- **Participation in TOT (Training of Trainers):** Project staff participated in a Training of Trainers (TOT) program to enhance their skills and knowledge in implementing project activities effectively. The TOT equipped them with the necessary tools, methodologies, and techniques to engage with beneficiaries, deliver training sessions, and provide ongoing support throughout the project duration.
- **Beneficiary Group Formation:** One of the key steps in the VWB project is the formation of beneficiary groups. These groups are composed of vulnerable women who come together to support each other, share experiences, and collectively participate in project activities.
- **Finalization of Training Plan for the Project Period:** A comprehensive training plan has been developed to guide the implementation of training activities throughout the project duration. This plan outlines the topics, methodologies, timelines, and resources required for conducting training sessions aimed at enhancing the skills, knowledge, and capacities of the beneficiary women. The training plan ensures a systematic and structured approach to skill development, thereby maximizing the impact of the project on the lives of the beneficiaries.



Challenges and lesson learned:

Challenges:

- One challenge faced in the project team composition was maintaining a consistent and skilled workforce. Staff turnover or inadequate training of new personnel could disrupt project continuity and effectiveness.
- Participating in Training of Trainers (TOT) sessions posed logistical challenges such as scheduling conflicts, travel arrangements, and resource allocation. Coordinating the attendance of project staff in TOT programs, especially when they were based in remote areas, required meticulous planning and coordination to minimize disruptions to project activities.

Lessons Learned:

- A crucial lesson learned was the importance of clear communication and role definition within the project team. Establishing clear responsibilities for the project manager and community organizers helped streamline decision-making processes, improve coordination, and enhance

overall project efficiency. Regular team meetings and performance reviews further facilitated alignment towards project goals.

- The process of finalizing the training plan for the entire project period taught the importance of adaptability and flexibility. Recognizing that project dynamics and beneficiary needs may evolve over time, the training plan was designed to be responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities. Incorporating feedback from beneficiaries and monitoring project progress allowed for adjustments to the training plan, ensuring its continued relevance and effectiveness throughout the project lifecycle.

Measuring Impact: Since the project began in October 2023, the reporting period has been relatively brief, allowing minimal time for significant impact to be observed. As of now, no measurable impact has been identified.

ICT PROGRAM

In the context of Mymensingh division of Bangladesh, the importance of ICT education for the impoverished cannot be overstated. With the rapid advancement of technology globally, ICT skills have become indispensable in nearly every sector of the economy. Providing ICT education to the poor not only equips them with valuable skills for the digital age but also opens doors to income-generating opportunities that were previously inaccessible. In a region like Mymensingh, where traditional livelihood options may be limited, empowering individuals with ICT proficiency can significantly enhance their prospects for economic advancement.

Moreover, ICT education serves as a catalyst for entrepreneurship and innovation among the economically disadvantaged in Mymensingh. With access to digital tools and training, individuals are empowered to explore entrepreneurial ventures and create their own income-generating activities. Whether through freelancing, e-commerce, or digital marketing, ICT skills enable individuals to leverage technology to start and grow small businesses, thereby reducing unemployment and poverty levels in the region. By fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and providing the necessary technical know-how, ICT education lays the groundwork for sustainable socio-economic development in Mymensingh.

Furthermore, ICT education holds the potential to bridge the digital divide and promote social inclusion in Mymensingh division. By democratizing access to information and communication technologies, marginalized communities can participate more actively in the digital economy and society at large. This not only enhances their economic well-being but also empowers them to engage in civic life, access essential services, and advocate for their rights. In a region characterized by socio-economic disparities, investing in ICT education for the poor is not only a matter of economic necessity but also a means of promoting equity, empowerment, and social cohesion across Mymensingh division.

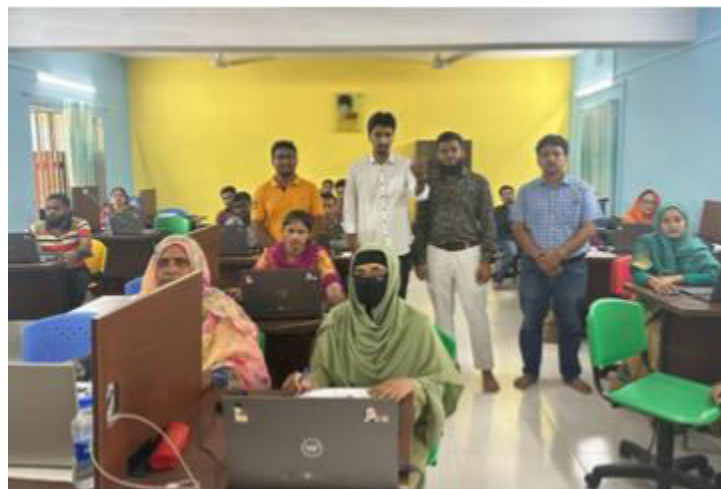
11. ICT in Education Literacy, Troubleshooting, and Maintenance Project

Project Overview: The organization has undertaken a significant initiative as part of the "Establishment of Sheik Russel Digital Lab Project- 2nd Phase" across Kishorganj, Narshigndi, and Gazipur districts of Bangladesh. This endeavor, conducted in collaboration with Optimal IT Solution Limited and SAVVY Techmart Limited, focuses on the implementation of the ICT In Education Literacy, Troubleshooting, and Maintenance Project. At its core, this project aims to enhance the capacity of education sector professionals in integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into the education system.

The primary objective of the project is to equip education professionals with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively utilize ICT tools and resources in teaching and learning processes. Through targeted training programs, participants are provided with literacy in ICT, enabling them to navigate digital platforms, utilize educational software, and integrate technology into classroom instruction. Additionally, the project emphasizes troubleshooting and maintenance skills, ensuring that educators are equipped to address technical challenges and maintain ICT infrastructure within educational institutions.

By implementing this capacity-building initiative, the organization seeks to catalyze positive transformations within the education sector, fostering innovation, efficiency, and inclusivity. By harnessing the potential of ICT, educators are empowered to create dynamic and engaging learning environments that cater to the diverse needs of students. Ultimately, the project contributes to the modernization of the education system, aligning it with the demands of the digital age and equipping students with the skills and competencies necessary for success in the 21st century.

Aim of the Project: The primary objective of the project is to provide teachers in schools and colleges with comprehensive training in ICT literacy, troubleshooting, and maintenance, ultimately facilitating the process of digital transformation in education.



Implemented Activities: The project aimed to provide training for a total of 4020 trainees, organized into 201 batches, within the Dhaka division. Whereas ASPADA assignment was to conduct trainings to 940 trainees divided into 47 batches, for teachers from schools and colleges located in Keshorganj, Narsingdi, and Gazipur districts. Throughout the reporting period, the project successfully completed all targeted training sessions, achieving the following specifications:

- **Trainer Qualifications:** Graduates from various disciplines with experience in IT training were recruited to lead the sessions.
- **Trainee Profile:** The trainees consisted of teachers from both schools and colleges.
- **Course Duration:** Each training course spanned over 10 classes, with each class lasting 8 hours.
- **Training Materials:** Developed training materials, including comprehensive guidelines, lecture notes, demonstrations, assignments, exercises, and evaluation criteria, were provided to facilitate effective learning.
- **Class Logistics:** Classes were conducted for 8 hours per day, 5 days per week, with a one-hour break included. Tea, snacks, and lunch were provided to all trainees during the sessions.
- **Training Equipment:** Each trainee was equipped with essential materials such as books, bags, writing pads, and pens.
- **Batch Size:** Each batch comprised 20 trainees, ensuring manageable group sizes for effective training delivery.
- **Monitoring and Supervision:** The ASPADA team maintained regular monitoring and supervision of the training sessions and oversaw all project activities to ensure quality and adherence to objectives.

Challenges and Lesson Learned:

- One challenge encountered during the training activity was the logistical coordination required to manage multiple batches of trainees across different locations within the Dhaka division. Coordinating schedules, venues, and resources for each training session, especially in remote areas, posed logistical challenges and required meticulous planning to ensure smooth implementation.
- Another challenge was allocating sufficient resources, including training materials, refreshments, and logistical support, to accommodate the needs of all trainees effectively. Limited resources or unexpected fluctuations in participant numbers could strain the project's capacity to deliver high-quality training experiences to every participant consistently.

Lesson Learned:

- One key lesson learned from the training activity was the importance of flexibility and adaptability in response to unforeseen challenges or changes in circumstances. Being prepared to adjust schedules, adapt training methodologies, and allocate resources dynamically allowed the project team to overcome logistical hurdles and deliver effective training experiences despite varying conditions. This lesson underscored the need for agile project management practices to ensure successful implementation in dynamic environments.

Measuring Impact: In the short term, the training activity resulted in an immediate enhancement of teachers' confidence and competence in utilizing ICT tools and resources within their classrooms.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Implementing non-formal education projects in rural areas of Bangladesh holds immense importance for several reasons. Firstly, these projects address the educational needs of individuals who may have missed out on formal schooling opportunities due to various socio-economic factors such as poverty, geographic isolation, or cultural barriers. By providing alternative avenues for learning, non-formal education projects offer a second chance to marginalized populations, empowering them with essential literacy, numeracy, and life skills. In rural areas where access to formal education infrastructure may be limited, non-formal education initiatives bridge the gap by bringing learning opportunities directly to communities, thereby promoting inclusive and equitable access to education.

Secondly, non-formal education projects play a vital role in fostering socio-economic development and poverty alleviation in rural Bangladesh. By equipping individuals with functional literacy and vocational skills, these projects enhance their employability and income-earning potential, contributing to poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods. Moreover, non-formal education empowers rural communities to address local challenges and seize opportunities for socio-economic advancement. Through targeted training programs in areas such as agriculture, entrepreneurship, and healthcare, non-formal education projects empower individuals to become agents of change within their communities, driving grassroots development and fostering resilience in the face of socio-economic challenges.

12. ENRICH Education Project

Project Overview: Under this project, 40 tutorial centers have been established in the Hobirbari union of Bhaluka Upazila, each operated by 40 dedicated teachers with support from the project team. These tutorial centers run daily sessions from 3.00 to 5.00 PM, offering a supportive learning environment for students. The project aims to achieve several objectives, including protecting school dropouts, alleviating educational anxieties, and enhancing the overall quality of education. These tutorial centers serve as supplementary educational facilities, focusing on homework preparation, fostering creativity, and instilling moral values. Additionally, each center provides opportunities for physical exercise and sports activities, enriching the holistic development of the students.

Currently, a total of 1122 students, comprising 602 girls and 520 boys, are enrolled in these tutorial centers. These students primarily come from the same village and attend formal schools in classes preschool to class two. The project specifically targets economically disadvantaged students who may struggle with educational expenses. By providing a conducive learning environment and addressing the needs of these vulnerable students, the project contributes to ensuring educational inclusivity and equity within the community.

Aim of the Project: The objective of the project are enumerated bellow.

- i. The project aims to diminish apprehensions and worries associated with attending school, fostering a positive outlook on learning and education among children.

- ii. Specifically targeting impoverished and marginalized children, the project endeavors to prevent premature discontinuation of schooling, ensuring equal access to educational opportunities for all.
- iii. By implementing measures such as teacher training and curriculum enhancements, the project seeks to elevate the overall quality of education provided to students, facilitating better learning outcomes.
- iv. The project aims to remove barriers to enrollment and participation, ensuring that every child, regardless of background, has the chance to access and benefit from primary education.
- v. Creating an atmosphere akin to maternal care, the project endeavors to provide nurturing and compassionate surroundings for learning, conducive to the holistic development and well-being of students.



Figure 30: Learners of ASPADA tutorial center

Achievement of the Project: The achievement of establishing 40 tutorial centers in 19 villages, each operated by a dedicated teacher, signifies an impactful expansion of educational access in rural communities. These centers serve as vital hubs for learning, providing a conducive environment for students to receive regular instruction and support.

Moreover, the regular attendance of 1122 students, comprising 520 boys and 602 girls from pre-school, first, and second grades, at the 40 tutorial centers underscores the project's success in facilitating consistent and inclusive education delivery. With classes conducted five days a week, these students benefit from structured learning experiences that contribute to their academic growth and development.

Additionally, the conduction of 480 parents' meetings in 2023 highlights the project's commitment to fostering community engagement and parental involvement in education. These meetings serve as valuable platforms for collaboration between educators and parents, facilitating open communication, sharing of feedback, and collective decision-making to support the educational journey of their children.

The rate of student attendance at the tutorial center, averaging at 85%, indicates a commendable level of regular participation and engagement among the enrolled students. This high attendance rate reflects the effectiveness of the tutorial centers in maintaining consistent educational support for the students, thereby maximizing the impact of the project on their learning outcomes and overall academic progress.

Furthermore, the supply of 120 education materials to the 40 tutorial centers signifies a significant investment in enhancing the quality of education delivery. These materials, ranging from textbooks to

teaching aids, play a crucial role in facilitating effective teaching and learning experiences within the tutorial centers. By equipping educators with the necessary resources, the project enhances their capacity to deliver engaging and impactful lessons, ultimately benefiting the students' educational attainment and holistic development.

Challenges and lesson learned:

Challenge: The main challenge encountered in the project implementation was effectively managing the time of teachers, particularly in providing adequate attention to students across different grade levels within the tutorial centers. With approximately 20-25 students per center and only one teacher available, ensuring equitable distribution of teaching time and personalized support to each student proved to be a logistical challenge. This constraint on teacher availability and the diverse needs of students across different grade levels posed a significant hurdle in maintaining the quality of education delivery and maximizing the impact of the tutorial centers.

Lesson Learned: Through project implementation, ASPADA learned the importance of strategic teacher allocation and time management strategies to address the challenge of catering to diverse student needs within tutorial centers. By implementing innovative scheduling techniques, such as staggered class timings or group-based learning approaches, teachers can optimize their time effectively and provide tailored support to students at varying academic levels. Additionally, leveraging technology and peer-to-peer learning initiatives can supplement teacher-led instruction, allowing for more efficient use of resources and enhancing the overall effectiveness of the tutorial.

Impact of the project:

- The establishment of tutorial centers has played a pivotal role in significantly reducing school dropout rates. By providing a supportive and conducive learning environment, these centers have addressed the various factors contributing to dropout, such as academic challenges, lack of support, and disengagement. As students receive personalized attention, academic assistance, and encouragement within the tutorial centers, they are more motivated to stay in school and actively participate in their education. Consequently, the dropout rates have decreased notably, ensuring that more students have the opportunity to complete their schooling and pursue further academic or career opportunities.
- The attendees of tutorial centers have experienced gradual improvements in their academic performance and overall educational outcomes. Through regular participation in tutorial sessions, students receive targeted support tailored to their individual needs, leading to enhanced understanding of subject matter, improved study habits, and increased confidence in their abilities. As a result, tutorial center attendees demonstrate tangible progress in their learning journey, reflected in improved grades, test scores, and academic achievements. Moreover, the positive impact extends beyond academic success to encompass personal growth, self-esteem, and a heightened sense of empowerment among students, paving the way for their continued development and success in future endeavors.

13. Scholarship program for ultra-poor brilliant students

Overview of the Project: ASPADA extends educational scholarships to uplift underprivileged individuals, spanning from school to university levels. This initiative, wholly funded by ASPADA, was instigated by the organization's founder and executive director, Mr. Lion Md. Abdur Rashid, driven by his passion for education. Selection for scholarships primarily stems from applications received, primarily from ASPADA's beneficiaries, secondarily any disadvantaged children. The assessment considers both the student's merit and their family's economic circumstances.

Scholarships are categorized into three tiers. Firstly, scholarships are awarded to underprivileged students from grade I to grade X, offering monthly amounts ranging from TK. 500/- to 1500/-, supporting expenses such as tuition fees, books, and stationery. Secondly, scholarships are granted to college-level students based on their performance in the SSC standard Board Examination, alongside consideration of their family's economic status, offering monthly amounts ranging from TK. 1500/- to 2500/-. Thirdly, scholarships are provided to university-level students based on their performance in the SSC and HSC standard Board Examinations or their academic achievements at the Graduation level, considering their family's financial situation. As of December 31, 2024, 96 university-level students, including those in medical, engineering, and agricultural fields, have been awarded scholarships ranging from TK. 2000/- to 5000/- per month through bank transfers. In total, 213 students have benefited from ASPADA's scholarship program as of December 2024.

Aim of the project: The project aims to promote academic excellence and prevent dropout rates among economically disadvantaged students. By fostering a culture of meritocracy, the project seeks to recognize and reward academic achievements, thereby motivating students to strive for excellence in their studies. Additionally, the project endeavors to provide support and resources to prevent students from dropping out of the education system, ensuring that they have the opportunity to pursue their educational goals and unlock their full potential. Through these efforts, the project aims to empower underprivileged students to overcome barriers to education and succeed academically.

Challenges and Lesson learned:

Challenges:

- One challenge encountered in the scholarship project was ensuring fairness and equity in the selection criteria. Balancing academic merit with economic need posed a challenge, as some applicants may excel academically but come from economically advantaged backgrounds, while others may face financial hardships despite their academic potential. Addressing this challenge required the development of transparent and inclusive selection criteria that consider both academic performance and economic circumstances to ensure that scholarships are awarded to those who truly need them.

Lesson Learned:

- [illegible]

Furthermore, the scholarship project has contributed to the improvement of educational outcomes among recipients. With access to financial support, students have been able to afford essential educational expenses, such as tuition fees, books, and materials, enhancing their learning experiences and academic performance. As a result, scholarship recipients have demonstrated increased motivation, engagement, and success in their studies, leading to improved grades, test scores, and overall academic achievements. Ultimately, the impact of the scholarship project extends beyond individual students to benefit their families and communities, as education serves as a pathway to socio-economic empowerment, prosperity, and upward mobility.

MICROFINANCE PROGRAM

Microfinance programs have played a pivotal role in fostering sustainable livelihoods and promoting micro-enterprises among Bangladesh's poor and marginalized communities. In a country where a significant portion of the population resides in rural areas and lacks access to formal banking services, microfinance institutions (MFIs) have emerged as catalysts for economic empowerment. By providing small loans, financial literacy training, and other support services, these programs enable individuals to start or expand their own businesses, thereby lifting themselves out of poverty. Moreover, the emphasis on group lending models fosters a sense of community cohesion and mutual support, further bolstering the resilience of these entrepreneurs.

Central to the success of microfinance in Bangladesh is the ingrained tradition of savings among the rural poor. Despite facing myriad challenges, including unpredictable income streams and limited resources, these communities have long embraced the practice of saving as a means of financial security. Microfinance programs leverage this savings culture by offering tailored products such as savings accounts and micro-insurance, thereby encouraging individuals to build assets and safeguard against unexpected shocks. This emphasis on savings not only instills financial discipline but also serves as a vital tool for long-term wealth accumulation, allowing beneficiaries to invest in education, healthcare, and housing, thus breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

Furthermore, the impact of microfinance extends beyond economic empowerment to encompass broader social and gender dimensions. By providing women with access to financial services and entrepreneurial opportunities, microfinance programs challenge traditional gender norms and empower women to assert greater control over their lives and futures. In a country where gender inequality remains pervasive, these initiatives contribute to enhancing women's social status, decision-making authority, and overall well-being. Additionally, the proliferation of micro-enterprises stimulates local economic development, creating employment opportunities and fostering a more inclusive growth trajectory that benefits the entire community. In essence, microfinance programs in Bangladesh serve as a potent tool for poverty alleviation, sustainable development, and social transformation, harnessing the power of finance to drive positive change at the grassroots level.

New Initiatives in 2024: In 2024, our organization introduced water credit adoption, offering water credit as a loan product to tackle safe water challenges arising from climate change. Additionally, we launched health microfinance, which gained traction and popularity among our members. This initiative was adopted from SAHAJ Community Hospital Nepal, as part of the FK Norway-supported project "Capacity Building of Organizations through Exchange of Primary Health Care Approach," positioning us as a pioneer in this field of Bangladesh.

Growth of Microfinance Program in 2024:

The Program: The economic empowerment section of this report presents fiscal year data, while the report itself is structured around the calendar year.

Numbers: As of the conclusion of 2024, our microfinance program's 91 branches provided support to approximately 131,611 families, offering financial, technical, and social assistance. Of these participants, approximately 32,412 were classified as ultra-poor, 35,491 were farm laborers or landless/marginal farmers, and the remaining were from marginalized communities.

Loan and Loan Insurance: During the fiscal year 2023-24, a total of 96,999 individuals borrowed just over 3,757 million BDT for investment in income-generating activities and enterprise development. In the unfortunate event of the borrower or main earner's demise, the loan insurance provides exemption of the loan balance, return of any savings, and a cash payout of 5,000 Tk (5,000 Tk for death and 3,000 Tk for serious illness or disability) to ultra-poor families. Borrowers pay a one-time premium of 0.7% of the loan, with an additional 40 Tk allocated for funeral costs, while a risk fund operates for ultra-poor families. During the same period, Tk 86,14,520 was waived under this plan.

Savings Mobilization: Both ASPADA and our clients benefit from our service, which aids poor families in saving small amounts, thereby building up their assets and creating capital for our revolving fund program. Weekly savings are mandatory, but members can also opt for the monthly savings deposit scheme, which offers a higher rate of returns.

Micro-Enterprise: In 2024, nearly 4,083 borrowers were granted loans totaling more than 439 million Tk. These funds were utilized to expand their already thriving enterprises, consequently generating local employment opportunities within their communities.

AT A GLANCE

Microfinance and Micro enterprise Programme

- It was started in 1997.
- Target groups: low-income households, destitute women, SME entrepreneurs, small farmers, etc.
- Current loan portfolio size: Sufallon-312,60,25,290; Jagaron-1.51,34,472; Agrashore-43,91,62,942; Agriculture- 7,11,78,762; Wash-10,58,58,803; Total: BDT 375,73,60,269 (3,757 million BDT), (30 June 2025)
- Types of financial products offered: Agriculture loan, Micro-loans, Enterprise loan, Water credit, savings, other services.
- Total active borrowers: 96,999
- Number of Branches: 91
- Number of staff: 835
- Number of depositors: 1,31,611
- PAR: 5.14
- CAR (capital adequacy ratio): 15%
- Loan Loss Provision (BS figure): BDT 148,788,111
- Credit rating: A
- Latest portfolio distribution clients: Male borrower 16,487 (outstanding-BDT1,176,762,973); Female borrower- 80,512 (Outstanding BDT 2,580,597,296)
- Loan disbursement till date: 45,033,454,987 (USD 370,697,567.11)

CAPACITY BUILDING AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Community skills building stands as a visionary strategy at the heart of ASPADA's core beliefs. The organization firmly believes that by empowering communities to enhance their capacities, skills, knowledge, and competencies, they can effectively address their own challenges, including poverty. As a testament to this belief, ASPADA has established two training facilities, namely the ASPADA Training Academy and ASPADA Training Centre. These facilities serve as permanent resources dedicated to bolstering community skills within the Mymensingh division, making them the largest training facilities in the region.

To advance the community's capacity for sustainable livelihood diversification, ASPADA has established two multi-storied training academies/centers situated in the Mymensingh district. The ASPADA Training Academy is located on Digharkanda Bypass Road, Sadar, Mymensingh, while the training center is situated on University Bypass Road, Nowdhore, Trisal, Mymensingh.

ASPADA Training Academy (Digharkanda Bypass, Mymensingh City Corporation)

Within the ASPADA Training Academy complex, there are two units. The first unit comprises five stories, while the second unit consists of seven stories. The latter has been newly constructed to accommodate VIP programs, boasting a three-star quality standard. It features VIP suites, a swimming pool, a rooftop garden, and other luxurious amenities.

The Training Academy comprises six training halls with accommodations for up to 200 people, offering both AC and non-AC options along with modern living amenities. Most living quarters are equipped with air conditioning and contemporary facilities. The academy serves various purposes, including organizational training, governmental and non-governmental organization workshops, meetings, seminars, symposiums, etc., available for rental.



Figure 31: ASPADA Training Academy

The dining hall provides delicious meals for in-house guests, overseen by expert chefs skilled in preparing traditional native and continental dishes alike.

At the training academy, we regularly conduct various life skills development programs for development staffs, community members, and individuals. These programs cover topics such as income-generating activities, development approaches, microfinance operation and management, entrepreneurship development, accounts management, savings management, and computer skill development. Additionally, the training center boasts a resource person pool and a consultant pool. Clients seeking specific resource persons can request them from ASPADA, along with the available training modules.

Apart from our organizational training programs, the facilities are available for rental. Government agencies, corporate offices, international and national non-governmental organizations utilize the training academy for regional activities. Prominent users include CARE Bangladesh, World Vision Bangladesh, Winrock International, The Hunger Project Bangladesh, IFDC, Water Aid, and Action in English, among others. We prioritize security with trained guards, CCTV surveillance, and collaboration with law enforcement agencies to ensure the safety and comfort of all attendees. Ample parking space is available on-site.

Our training complex stands out for its integrated management team, combining training halls and residences in one building. It offers well-equipped facilities, comfortable accommodations, and delicious dining options. Convenient road access and proximity to historical sites enhance the overall experience. The complex also boasts affordable pricing, lift access, firefighting facilities, and stunning natural views.

Notably, we've recently added two separate 3-star level venues featuring VIP accommodations, swimming pools, rooftop gardens, and more amenities to elevate the experience for our guests.

Venue:

All venues are furnished with contemporary and stylish furniture, creating a neat and inviting atmosphere. We provide a wide array of training accessories, including multimedia projectors, laptops, computers, mobile phones, photocopiers, whiteboards, VIP cards, flip charts, markers, dusters, and pointer sticks, ensuring that all necessary resources are readily available for our clients.

New Building:

SL No.	Particulars	Capacity	Total
1.	Deluxe Training Venue Ac With sound system-400A	40-150	1
2.	Deluxe Training Venue Ac With sound system-400B	40-100	1
3.	Deluxe Training Venue Ac With sound system-400 Full	100-500	1
Total =			3



Figure 32: Opening ceremony of new building at ASPADA Training Academy

Old Building:

SL No.	Particulars		Total
1.	Executive Meeting Room Ac with Sound System-200C	10-20	1
2.	Executive Meeting Room Ac with Sound System-102	20-45	1
3.	Training Venue Ac with Sound System-200B	45-50	1
4.	Training Venue Ac with Sound System-200A	50-100	1
5.	Conference Room Ac With sound system-200 Full	100-350	1
6.	Conference Room Ac With sound system-500	500	1
Total=			6



Figure 2: Training Hall of ASPADA training academy

Accommodation Facilities:

The accommodation rooms at the training academy are elegantly furnished with modern furniture, tiled floors, and well-appointed bathroom fittings, ensuring a standard and comfortable living experience for guests. The complex offers accommodation for up to 200 individuals at a time, with options for both air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned rooms. Additionally, there is a dedicated block for women participants. Each floor features spacious passages, balconies, and corridors. Amenities include internet access, indoor games, a prayer room, access to newspapers, generator backup services, and round-the-clock tea/coffee facilities, showcasing the effectiveness of our skillful management system.

New Building:

SL No.	Room Type	Number of Room	Capacity	Total
1.	VIP Couple Bed President Room	1 Room	1 Person	1 Person
2.	VIP Couple Bed Ac King Room	1 Room	1 Person	1 Person
3.	VIP Couple Bed Queen Room	1 Room	1 Person	1 Person
4.	Deluxe Single Suit Room	7 Rooms	1 Person	7 Person
5.	Deluxe Twine Couple Bed Ac Room	6 Room	2 Person	12 Person
6.	Suit Single Room	24 Room	1 Person	24 Person
Total Rooms=		40 Rooms	Total Capacities=	46 Person



Figure 3: Available accommodation facilities

Old Building:

SL No.	Room Type	Number of Room	Capacity	Total
1.	Single Non-Ac Room	4 Rooms	1 Person	4 Person
2.	Two Bed Ac Room	4 Rooms	2 Person	8 Person
3.	VIP Two Bed Ac Room	10 Rooms	2 Person	20 Person
4.	Single Ac Room	6 Rooms	1 Person	6 Person
5.	3 Bed Non-Ac General Room	14 Rooms	3 Person	42 Person
6.	4 Bed Non-AC General Room	4 Rooms	4 Person	16 Person
Total		42 Rooms	Total Capacities=	96 Person
Rooms=				



Figure 4: Insite Decoration of VIP suit

Food:

The training complex features four spacious dining halls capable of accommodating up to 250 individuals simultaneously. Flexibility is offered with the option to divide the dining space using temporary partitions to cater to different user groups. Skilled chefs specializing in both native and foreign/continental cuisine are permanently stationed at the training academy. We offer a diverse menu, including traditional dishes, foreign delicacies, fast food, snacks, and beverages, tailored to meet the specific preferences and demands of our clients.

ASPADA Training Center (University Bypass, Trisal, Mymensingh)

ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan Foundation operates an additional multi-storied training center in Trisal Upazila of Mymensingh district. This center is situated on Kobi Nazrul Islam University Bypass Road, Nawdhore, Trisal, Mymensingh, near the Saudia filling station along the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway.

Venue:

The Trisal training center features a single air-conditioned training venue with a seating capacity for 150 individuals. It is furnished with modern training equipment, including a multimedia projector, laptop, handheld microphone, whiteboard, VIP cards, flip charts, markers, dusters, and pointer sticks, ensuring all necessary resources are readily accessible for training sessions.



Figure 5: one of the Training venues

Accommodation:

The training center offers accommodation options for 36 individuals, with both air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned choices available. Housed within a three-storied building complex, the venue, accommodation, and dining facilities are conveniently situated under one roof. ASPADA ensures high-quality accommodation featuring modern furniture and well-appointed bathroom fittings, aiming to provide clients with comfortable living during their stay.

Food:

The training complex boasts a spacious dining hall capable of accommodating up to 40 individuals for communal meals. Skilled chefs, proficient in preparing both native and foreign dishes, are stationed at the training center on a permanent basis. Our menu offerings include a variety of options, ranging from traditional and continental dishes to fast food, snacks, and beverages, tailored to meet the specific preferences and requests of our clients.



Figure 6: Staff training at Trisal Training Center of ASPADA

Training Service

The organization offers two distinct training services:

1. **Training Service:** ASPADA provides comprehensive capacity-building training to various organizations' staff, targeted beneficiaries, civil society members, government officials, etc., on a package basis. Here, ASPADA customizes training modules according to the client's requirements, arranges expert trainers, venues, meals, accommodations, equipment, training materials, and offers event management services. It's worth noting that ASPADA maintains a pool of training consultants available for engagement as per specific requirements.
2. **Training Facilities Rental:** ASPADA rents out its training centers to governmental and non-governmental organizations, international non-governmental organizations, UN organizations, projects, and corporates for hosting workshops, seminars, symposiums, AGMs, trainings, conferences, etc. In this arrangement, ASPADA provides the venue, accommodations, meals and snacks, equipment, and training materials tailored to the event's needs.

DAY OBSERVATION

Observing International Days holds significant importance for NGOs as it provides invaluable opportunities to raise awareness, advocate for important causes, and mobilize support on a global scale. These designated days serve as focal points to shed light on critical issues, ranging from human rights and gender equality to environmental sustainability and health care access. By participating in International Day Observations, NGOs can amplify their messages, drawing attention to pressing issues that might otherwise go unnoticed. Moreover, these observances often coincide with coordinated efforts by governments, international organizations, and grassroots movements, creating a powerful platform for collaboration and collective action.

Participation in International Day Observations also strengthens an NGO's credibility and visibility, both locally and internationally. By aligning with these globally recognized events, NGOs demonstrate their commitment to shared values and goals, enhancing their reputation as agents of positive change. Engaging in activities such as public events, workshops, and social media campaigns during International Day Observations enables NGOs to reach broader audiences and connect with stakeholders across borders. Furthermore, these observances provide opportunities for networking and partnership-building, fostering collaboration with like-minded organizations and individuals dedicated to advancing common objectives for the betterment of society.

As a reputable organization, we recognize the significance of observing specific days to raise awareness among the masses regarding pertinent issues. The organization actively participates in commemorating various days aimed at advocating for rights and fostering awareness within communities.

Social welfare day: On January 2nd, 2023, ASPADA organized an event to mark Social Welfare Day, aimed at inspiring the public towards social welfare initiatives. The event featured a rally and indoor discussions, with the presence of DC Mymensingh and members of civil society. ASPADA's Executive Director, Md. Abdur Rashid, participated as a special guest in the open session discussion.

World Women Day: ASPADA coordinated events across Mymensingh, Tangail, and Gazipur on March 8th, 2023, in celebration of International Women's Day, aiming to raise awareness about women's rights among the public. Collaborating with district and upazila administrations, as well as the Department of Women Affairs, ASPADA facilitated rallies, with participation from various organizations in Mymensingh. In the subsequent open discussion session, the District Commissioner of Mymensingh and the District Women Affairs Officer were respectively featured as the chief and special guests. The event culminated in a commitment to fostering a robust GO-NGO partnership to uphold women's rights and promote the holistic development of underprivileged women. Additionally, ASPADA's branch offices at different district and upazila levels actively engaged in observing the day in collaboration with local administrations.



Figure 33: Celebration of International women's day

International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking 2021: On June 26, 2023, ASPADA organized an awareness-raising program in Mymensingh to observe the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illegal Trafficking in collaboration with the Department of Narcotics Control. The event featured a rally and the distribution of leaflets addressing issues of drug abuse and trafficking, with participation from the district administration.

World Environment Day: The organization marked World Environment Day on June 5, 2023, across Mymensingh, Gazipur, and Tangail districts. The event, spanning several days, included a rally in collaboration with district authorities, indoor discussions, and the distribution of seedlings among school students. As an environmental foundation, we strive to uphold a pristine environment and elevate awareness about the pressing issue of climate change, which holds global significance. On this significant occasion, the organization distributed tree saplings and facilitated tree planting activities in local institutional premises.



Figure 34: Tree plantation in the office premises

World HIV/AIDS Day: HIV/AIDS continues to pose a growing threat to global public health, necessitating concerted efforts to combat its consequences. On December 1, 2023, ASPADA organized an event aimed at raising awareness among the masses about HIV/AIDS and its transmission dynamics. The event featured a rally in collaboration with the district civil surgeon's office and the DC office, along with informative discussions.

World Disability Day: On World Disability Day, observed on December 3, 2023, wheelchairs were distributed to individuals with disabilities. The event encompassed a discussion session attended by high-ranking government officials and public representatives.

National Youth Day: On November 1, 2023, Bangladesh celebrated National Youth Day, and ASPADA organized a rally and prize distribution ceremony to commemorate the occasion. The event welcomed the participation of youth beneficiaries who were eager to learn about the opportunities and provisions available for them, as well as the ongoing initiatives offered by the organization.



Figure 35: Human chain of youths

International Anti-Corruption Day: Corruption remains a prevalent issue in developing countries like Bangladesh. To address this concern, the organization organized an observation event on December 9, 2023. The event featured a rally in Bhaluka Upazila of Mymensingh district, as well as an indoor discussion attended by civil society members, government officials, and community members.

World Human Rights Day: Just like every year, ASPADA Paribesh Unnayan Foundation organized a day-long event to observe World Human Rights Day on December 10, 2023, aimed at raising awareness among the local community about human rights initiatives led by the United Nations. The program featured a rally, jointly organized with the district administration and NGO network, as well as an in-house discussion session involving organizational staff and beneficiaries.



Figure 36: Rally on world Human Rights Day

Day of Victory: On December 16th, Bangladesh celebrates Victory Day, commemorating its liberation. In festive spirit, the day was observed on December 16th, 2023, featuring various activities including laying floral tributes to martyrs, organizing rallies, open discussions, and hosting blood donation camps.



Figure 37: Floral respect to the martyrs on the day of victory

GOVERNANCE OF ASPADA

I. In ASPADA, the Executive Committee serves as the organization's principal "Think Tank." It offers strategic guidance, upholds organizational values, oversees fund utilization, and approves budgets and financial statements. Additionally, the committee ensures legal compliance and adherence to statutory regulations. Here are the members of the Executive Committee as of December 31, 2024.

List of Executive committee

Name	Designation	Profession
Md. Abul Faiz Kutobi	Chairman	Agricultural Researcher
Md. Abdul Khaleque	Vice-Chairman	Development worker
Md. Abdur Rashid	Executive Director	Development worker
Md. Fakhar Uddin	Treasurer	Rtd. Govt. school Teacher
Md. Atiqul Islam	Executive Member	Social worker
Mst. Sabina Khatun	Executive Member	Social worker
Mst. Fatama Akter	Executive Member	Social worker

ii. EC committee Meetings: In 2024, the Governing Body of ASPADA convened on five occasions.

iii. Annual General Meeting: ASPADA's Annual General Meeting for the year 2024 took place on August 5th, 2024.



Figure 38: Annual General meeting of 2021

iv. In accordance with the Memorandum, Rules & Regulations of the Organization, no Executive Committee Member of ASPADA received remuneration, sitting fees, or any other form of compensation from the Organization. This practice has been maintained since the organization's establishment. Additionally, ASPADA did not provide travel reimbursements to any board member or other members to attend Board Meetings or any other office gatherings.

v. Staff Details (As on 31st December 2024): Directors, deputy directors, and Project Coordinators/Managers, working in collaboration with the Executive Director, bear the responsibility of supervising all daily operations of ASPADA. The organization boasts a workforce of 907 full-time staff distributed across various tiers.