

A photograph showing two women in a rural setting in Bangladesh. The woman on the left, wearing a blue patterned sari, is holding a tablet and pointing at the screen. The woman on the right, wearing a colorful sari with a red and green headscarf, is looking at the tablet with a smile. The background shows a brick wall and some outdoor items.

The
Hunger
Project.

BANGLADESH

Three Decades of Innovative Leadership
in Bangladesh's Development

THE HUNGER PROJECT BANGLADESH

The Hunger Project (THP) Bangladesh is the nation's largest volunteer-driven development organization. It was registered with the NGO Bureau, Registration No. 557, dated 11 November 1991. It is an affiliate of the Global Hunger Project, headquartered in New York, a 501c3 organization incorporated in 1977 and in consultative status with the United Nations since 1985. In Bangladesh, the programs of THP are supported by a highly committed staff based in 10 regional offices, with its national office in Dhaka and are funded by bilateral donors and private citizens worldwide.

In a radical departure from traditional service delivery approaches and in an intentional drive to overcome Bangladesh's deeply entrenched mindset of resignation and dependency, THP Bangladesh bases its strategies on the principles of:

Self-Reliance

Human Dignity

Volunteerism

Gender Equality

Sustainability

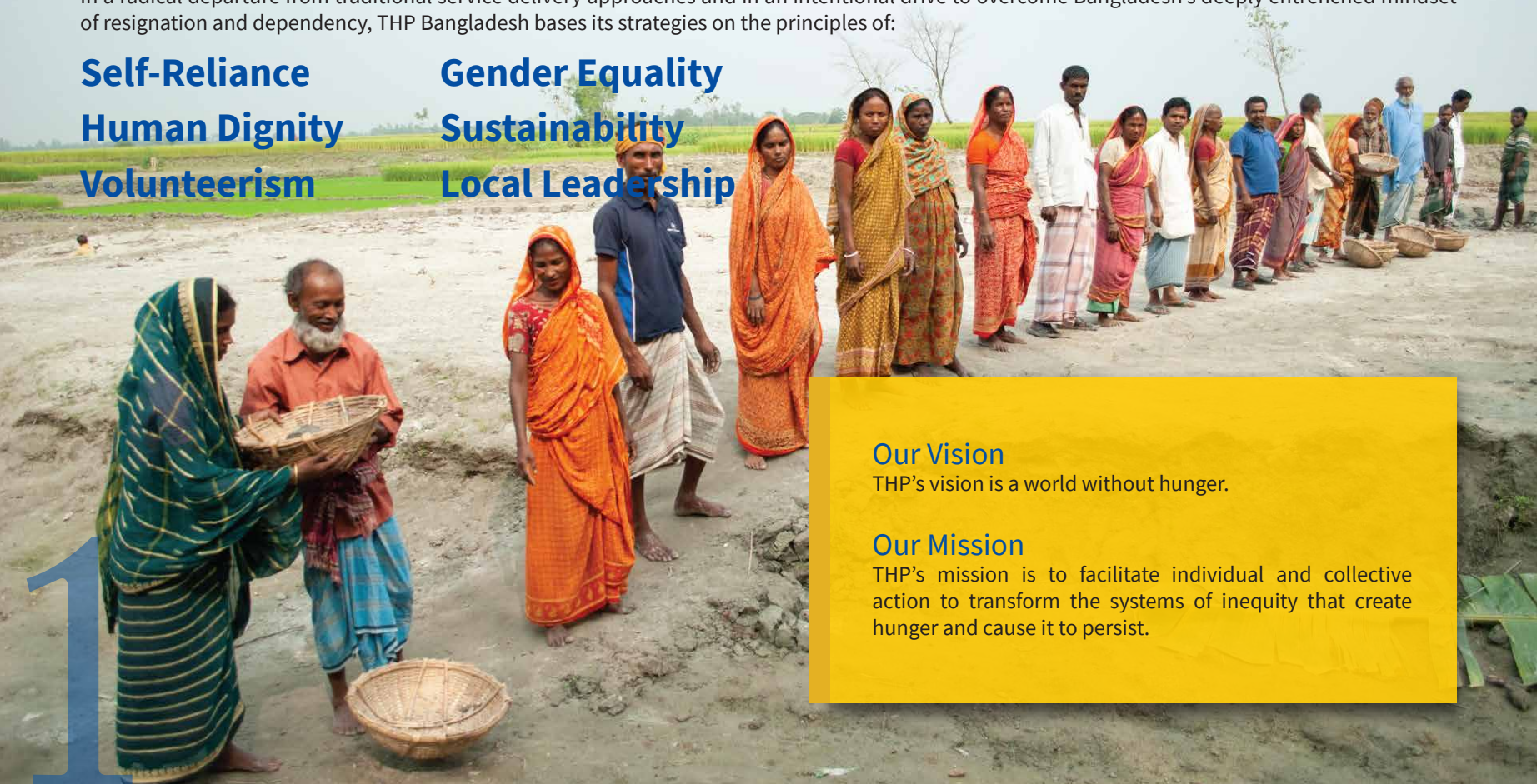
Local Leadership

Our Vision

THP's vision is a world without hunger.

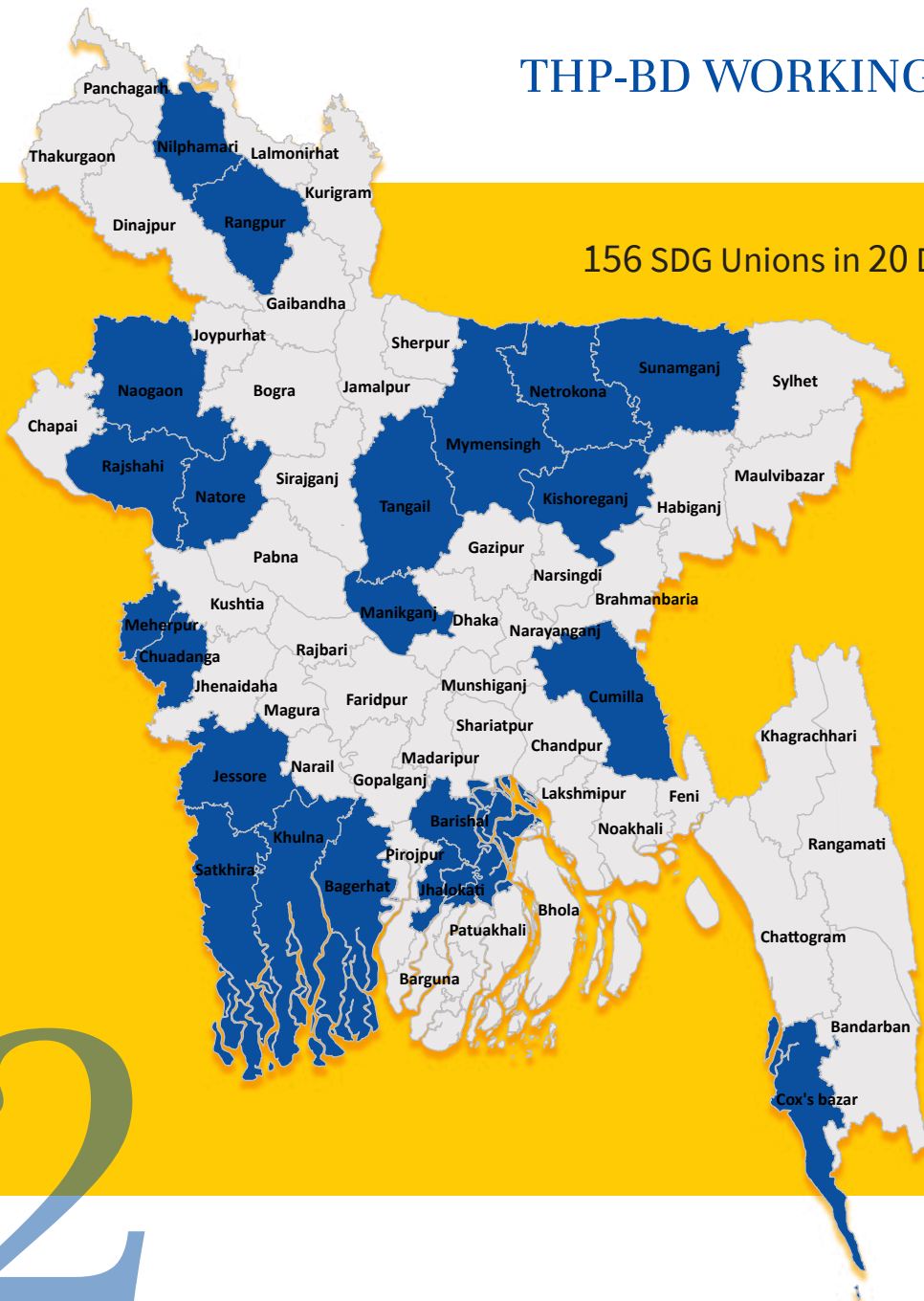
Our Mission


THP's mission is to facilitate individual and collective action to transform the systems of inequity that create hunger and cause it to persist.



THP-BD WORKING AREAS

156 SDG Unions in 20 Districts



 Districts	SDG Unions
Bagerhat	32
Barishal	08
Chuadanga	01
Cumilla	06
Cox's Bazar	02
Jessore	02
Jhalokhati	02
Khulna	16
Kishoreganj	10
Manikgonj	02
Meherpur	09
Mymensingh	08
Naogaon	12
Natore	02
Netrakona	02
Nilphamari	02
Rajshahi	06
Rangpur	12
Satkhira	12
Sunamganj	04
Tangail	06



THE HUNGER PROJECT BANGLADESH

THP Bangladesh carries out its mission of ending hunger and poverty with strategies that are affordable, effective, replicable and sustainable. It implements a gender-focused, community-led approach to empower rural communities throughout the country. Our “mantra” is: start with women, mobilize everyone, and make local democracy work. We mobilize and strengthen the capacity of people through workshops and training which are both transformative – awakening people to their rights and power – and educative, in terms of skills and knowledge.

GENDER FOCUSED, COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT (CLD)

- Mobilizing People at the Grassroots to Build Self-reliance
- Empowering Women and Girls as Key Change Agents
- Forging Effective Partnerships with Local Government
- Building Alliances for Advocacy, Action and Adoption

SDG
Localization

Participatory
Local
Government

Gender and
Youth
Development

Peace
Building

ACTION: Key Programs

SHUJAN

PFG

NGCAF

BNN

VDT

GGG

YEH

FOUNDATION: 270,000+ Trained Volunteers and 7 Citizen Networks



OUR TRAINING PROGRAMS AND WORKSHOPS

Training is a key component of THP Bangladesh's work. The centerpiece of THP's strategy is the grassroots training and ongoing support of more than **184,000** volunteer Animators, **42%** of whom are women. These Animators include volunteers from different backgrounds, social activists, women and youth leaders, representatives of local governments, community leaders, political and civil society leaders, government officials and anyone who is interested to do something for their communities and for the nation.

First they undergo a Vision, Commitment and Action Workshop (VCAW) through which THP directly intervenes a mindset of dependency among the participants. In the VCAW, people discover the power of their commitment, and take a stand to achieve their vision. Together, they set priorities for themselves and their communities which they can achieve with their own resources.

The Animators are chosen from among the participants of the VCAW. They then undergo an initial 4-day long Animators Training, designed to give them a deep grounding in the principles of people-centered (versus donor-driven) development, and a thorough understanding of gender issues and how gender issues give rise to poverty and malnutrition in Bangladesh. Through this training, Animators break through to an authentic faith in the power of grassroots people and discover the skills to call forth and unleash people's capabilities. The Animator Training, originally developed in Bangladesh, is now used in all countries where The Hunger Project operates.

থানা: সিএসএস আড়া সেক্টর, পু. বা.
আয়োজন ও পরিচালনায়: দি হান্গার প্রজেক্ট

TRAINING PROGRAMS AND WORKSHOPS OF THP BANGLADESH



The trained Animators organize mass action campaigns in their areas, work closely with the UP representatives to achieve progress toward social goals such as eliminating child marriages, achieving sanitation coverage throughout the Union, facilitating open budget meetings and Ward assemblies to provide transparency and accountability, etc. The Hunger Project Bangladesh works to strengthen their capacity, follows up with them, supports them in organizing and conducting events, meetings, campaigns, and assists them in undertaking development initiatives.

The Animators make-up a significant portion of THP Bangladesh's 7 Citizens' Networks- VDT, GGS, BNN, NGCAF, YEH, PFG and SHUJAN- that play major roles in the key programs of the organization.

- Vision, Action, Commitment Workshop (VCAW)
- Animators Training
- Capacity-building Training for Elected UP Bodies
- Capacity-building Training for VDT Members
- Training of Volunteer Trainers
- Participatory Action Research (PAR) Foundation Course
- Training on Skill Development and Income Generating Activities
- Women Leaders Foundation Course
- Youth Leadership Training
- Youth Activist Training
- TOT for Campaigning Facilitator
- Training on Networking and Advocacy
- Ethical Leadership Training
- Training on Community Philanthropy
- Training on State Schemes and Entitlements
- TOT on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)
- Training on SRHR
- TOT on WASH
- Basic Training on People Against Violence Everywhere (PAVE) program
- PAVE Lead Training
- PAVE Engage Training
- PAVE Alternative Training
- PAVE Harmony Workshop
- Youth Ambassadors Development Training under PAVE program

KEY PROGRAMS OF THP BANGLADESH

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- A photograph of a woman wearing a red headscarf with a yellow floral pattern, smiling broadly. She is holding several green tomatoes in her right hand. The background shows a lush green field with tomato plants and wooden stakes. A large, semi-transparent yellow box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing a list of key programs.
- SDG Localization
 - Poverty Alleviation
 - Empowerment of Women and Girls
 - Youth Engagement in Community Development
 - Peacebuilding Initiatives
 - Advocacy for Good Governance

SDG LOCALIZATION

SDG Unions come into existence through a partnership between the people, their elected Union Parishad (UP) representatives and their government functionaries. In **156** Unions across Bangladesh, THP Bangladesh has pioneered the “SDG Union Strategy,” which strengthens local political leadership through intensive training with elected Union Parishad members, mobilizing an active and engaged civil society, and awakening and empowering the citizens to help achieve the SDGs. Union Parishad members are trained in the principles of:

Bottom-up development

Decentralized democracy

Accountable governance

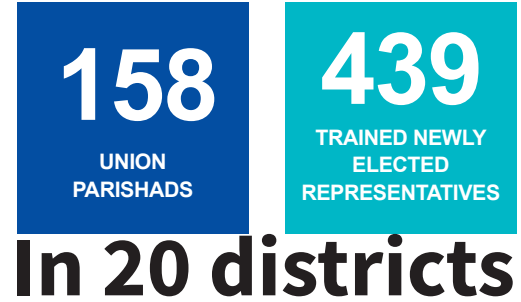
Statutory specifics of their roles and responsibilities

THP plays an important role in pioneering reforms for greater citizen participation and social accountability, and we are demonstrating how, when implemented, this stronger partnership among elected representatives, public servants, civil society and the people as a whole can set and achieve SDG targets.



SDG Localization PARTICIPATORY LOCAL GOVERNMENT

By 2000, THP Bangladesh's experience had shown that grassroots development can only truly be sustainable when it is in partnership with accountable, transparent local government. In fact, many initiatives of the past did not take roots because they depended on temporary structures parallel to the constitutionally mandated Union Parishads. Thus, THP works to make local government functional and accountable at the level closest to poor people, the Union, through the following three components:



Union Parishad (UP).

THP conducts a three-day residential course for all members of the Parishad, training them in principles of bottom-up development, decentralized democracy, accountable governance and the statutory specifics of their roles and responsibilities. THP also assists the UPs to formulate their 5-year plan and conduct open-budget meetings.

Component-1

Standing Committees. Bangladeshi law calls for each Union Parishad to establish Standing Committees to enable citizens' participation and oversight in key areas such as health, education and economic development. In many Unions throughout the country, these committees are rarely functioning. THP makes certain that in the SDG Unions they are fully functioning and that they are capacitated to do their job. Standing Committee members help to establish priorities, agendas and budgets of the UP.

Component-2

Ward Shava. Ward Shavas are mandatory, twice-yearly assemblies of all voting-aged citizens. They are held in each of the nine Wards within a Union. The Shava is designed to provide a transparency and accountability mechanism, enabling the citizens to engage directly with their elected representatives and allowing them to transparently discuss ongoing and planned local government projects. The Ward Shava is the most powerful forum for grassroots women to bring their concerns to the attention of the Standing Committees and UP Members. THP helps organize these Shavas and ensures that they are participatory and inclusive.

Component-3

SDG Localization Village Development Team (VDT)



1,460

VDTs

29,411

**NETWORK
MEMBERS**

IN 20 DISTRICTS

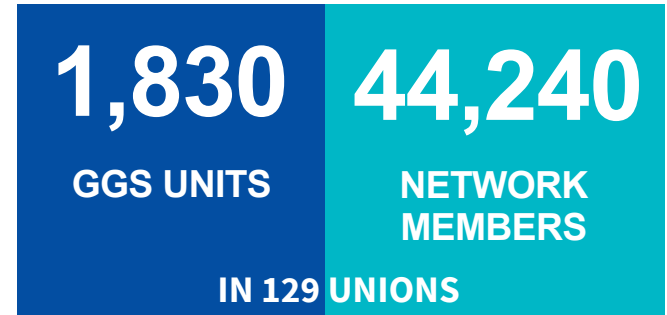
Village Development Team is a village based volunteer group, formed to set local priorities, engage with local government and mobilize local actions with an aim to achieve the SDGs. A VDT consists of 15-25 members from active volunteers of the concerned village, women leaders, youth representatives, elected representatives of the Union Parishad, like-minded important professionals and acceptable people of the community. VDTs play a key role in community outreach and community mobilization. All SDG Union related programs of THP are implemented in villages through these VDTs.

THP forms these teams, mobilizes them, strengthens their capacity through residential training programs to carry out development initiatives, follows up with them and assist them to organize events and undertake various activities.

Activities of the VDTs include, but not limited to-

- Identifying social, economic, environmental and other problems in their own villages, analyze and prioritize them, formulate plans to solve those problems, and then implement and evaluate activities;
- Providing leadership and coordination of overall village development activities;
- Contributing to the growth of citizenship and social justice;
- Conducting village meetings, yard meetings and campaigns to create awareness among villagers regarding various issues;
- Playing a vital role in ensuring the maintenance of existing government facilities and services, and their access by the public;
- Being proactive in solving any problems or conflicts immediately that arise in the community;
- Encouraging and supporting youth units and women leaders to engage in community development activities
- Encouraging the voters to participate in the Ward Shavas; highlighting the priority of the village problems by participating in the meeting, participating in the planning and implementation of activities;
- Liaising with Union Parishad and other Standing Committee members to assist in obtaining government services.

Poverty Alleviation
**PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR) WITH ULTRA-POOR:
PEOPLE'S RESEARCHERS**



An integral component in every SDG Union is PAR: Mobilizing the “Ultrapoorest.” The “Ultrapoorest”, of course, could be considered a demeaning development buzzword. Our program calls them Peoples’ Researchers in a Participatory Action Research (PAR) program. These often destitute individuals, primarily women, analyze their own condition to the point where they can identify their own solutions and form Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to implement them. The PAR process is designed to develop leadership and dignity, stimulate social responsibility, and empower the poorest of the poor.

In order to promote PAR as an empowering tool to reach the poorest of the poor, a group of volunteers are selected from the most engaged and active Animators. They participate in a 4-day, residential PAR Foundation Course, organized and facilitated by The Hunger Project. These Animators learn how to analyze their own social reality and facilitate the same process within their communities among the poorest of the poor, capacitating them to identify and solve problems through their own actions. They also learn how to form SHGs at the local level.

The Self-Help Groups, known as Gono Gobeshona Samity (GGS), work towards economic empowerment through savings and initiating income generating activities. With the leadership of THP, the 1830 GGS units have saved 227,071,017 Bangladeshi taka cumulatively by exercising a weekly or monthly savings scheme. In addition to using these savings themselves for various income-generating activities, the GGSs have been able to establish themselves as small microfinance institutions in their communities.

The GGSs also tackle issues such as improved education, preventing dowry, child marriage and violence against women, good health and sanitation, combating the harmful effects of climate change, increasing access to government services, realizing civil rights, creating social justice, expansion of natural agriculture method to reduce the use of harmful chemical fertilizers and pesticides in agriculture, etc.

Poverty Alleviation

THE JOURNEY OF ZERO BUDGET NATURAL FARMING (ZBNF) HAS BEGUN WITH THE INITIATIVE OF THP'S PAR UNIT



The PAR unit of The Hunger Project Bangladesh, In collaboration with SPNF Movement Bangladesh, has started promoting a new farming method as an alternative to conventional chemical fertilizers and pesticides, which has already received a wide response among the farmers involved with GGS. Utilizing this method, agriculture will be free of cost! Crop production will not require any chemical fertilizers and pesticides. It will be possible to produce safe food, alleviate poverty and address the adverse effects of climate change. 90 bighas of land can be cultivated with just a handful of dung and urine of a single local cow, mixed with some readily available, cheap ingredients. Indigenous species of herbs will be used as pesticides. This method has been named as Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) because the farmers do not have any expenditure in this method of cultivation. The inventor of this agricultural method is India's famous agriculturist Dr. Subhash Palekar. Thus, this farming method is also known as Subhash Palekar Natural Farming or SPNF in short. At present, more than 20 million farmers in different states of India are using this cultivation method. Through his research, Dr. Palekar has shown that 98 percent of the nutrients needed to grow a crop plant come from nature. Chemical fertilizers are applied to compensate for the remaining 1.5 to 2 percent. This amount of nutrients can be naturally produced by specially preparing the soil so that the number of microorganisms in it increases significantly. Thus, there is no need to apply artificial fertilizers. This natural method also helps restore the natural ecosystem which in turn makes it possible to increase the overall yield of cultivation and address the adverse effects of climate change.

1 THP organizes two-day training programs for the farmers where an SPNF expert teaches them all the techniques to use this farming method. The participants of the training have informed that they are already getting good results by applying the ZBNF method in cultivating paddy, various fruits and vegetables such as chili and mango. THP Bangladesh believes that the widespread adoption of this natural method of cultivation will contribute in alleviating poverty, ensuring food security and tackling the adverse effects of climate change in the country.

Empowerment of Women and Girls
BIKOSHITO NARI NETWORK (BNN):
THE WOMEN RISING IN BANGLADESH



319
UNITS

10,000
TRAINED
NETWORK
MEMBERS

51 DISTRICTS, 68 UPAZILAS, 199 UNIONS

The purpose of the Bikoshito Nari (Enlightened Women) Network is to organize, empower and inspire the women of Bangladesh by developing their leadership skills and strengthening their capacity to powerfully confront the issues of gender inequality. Women Leaders undergo an empowerment process spread over a period of four years, at the end of which women gain a clearer understanding of gender and their rights, patriarchy, development paradigm, etc. The program capacitates them to advocate at the policy level and take a lead role in decision-making both at home and within her community.

The trained Women Leaders undertake social awareness events on child marriage, dowry, marriage registration and many other issues. They develop the necessary skills to advocate for their rights and mobilize other women in their communities through courtyard meetings, campaigns and rallies. They also contest for constitutional and social leadership positions.

140 BNN leaders received JOYEETA award since 2013-2021.

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Empowerment of Women and Girls NATIONAL GIRL CHILD ADVOCACY FORUM (NGCAF)

253

UNITS

30 DISTRICTS, 52 UPAZILAS, 171 UNIONS

4,421

**NETWORK
MEMBERS**

In response to the deeply entrenched gender discrimination, The Hunger Project created the National Girl Child Advocacy Forum (NGCAF), an alliance comprising 198 international and local civil society organizations. The Hunger Project serves as the lead organization and secretariat of the alliance. The goals of NGCAF are to:

- Build awareness of the importance of valuing girls
- Create an enabling environment to secure girls' rights
- Advocate policies that create opportunities to improve girls' lives

NGCAF focuses on grassroots campaigns and activism regarding the issues of child marriage, violence against women and children, sexual harassment, trafficking, and many more. Publication and circulation of the yearly report on Violence Against Girl Children is one of the most important and well recognized activities of the alliance. The Forum has been included in the Central Women and Child Abuse Prevention Committee formed by the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs of the GoB. Among other significant actions, a draft law titled "Sexual Harassment Prevention and Remedy Law, 2019" has been developed and handed over to the Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights Committee by NGCAF.

NGCAF inaugurated National Girl Child Day on September 30th, 2000, in partnership with the government, which has since been endorsed by the United Nations as an International Day of Celebration. Activities take place each year through nationwide rallies, marches, and school based activities.

Youth Engagement in Community Development YOUTH ENDING HUNGER - YEH



1,371

UNITS

33,105

MEMBERS
INSTITUTIONS AND
COMMUNITY

IN 52 DISTRICTS

Youth Mobilization has always been at the heart of THP. To channel the energy and skills of youths for the betterment of the nation, THP Bangladesh has been carrying out its Youth Ending Hunger (YEH) program since 1995. Today, nearly 27000 (not updated) trained Youth Leaders are involved with THP. They bring the creativity and leadership of the youth to the forefront while stimulating a sense of social responsibility among their peers in universities, schools, and communities throughout Bangladesh.

With the guidance of THP, the YEH members meet monthly in chapters across the country, planning activities to improve their communities with an emphasis on active citizenship and human rights. These youth leaders organize campaigns in their communities on issues such as nutrition, education, preventing child marriage, family planning, tree plantation, environmental education and blood donation. They also arrange rallies, organize cultural and sports clubs, dialogues on pluralism and extremism, debates, math olympiads, writing competitions, study circles, etc. to develop their own creative potential. In any given year, YEH mobilizes 100,000 (is this correct?) male and female youths to take constructive Social Action Projects (SAPs) to improve their own communities and the nation.

Peacebuilding Initiatives PEACE FACILITATOR GROUPS (PFG)

73
PFGs

1,800+
NETWORK
MEMBERS

POLITICAL LEADERS AND COS

The People Against Violence Everywhere (PAVE) program of THP aims to establish peace and improve sustainable social harmony at all levels of society, celebrating the diversity of religion and culture of Bangladesh as its strength, through the promotion of democratic values and development of skills for peaceful conflict resolution among the leaders of the society.

The PAVE program trains leaders from different political parties, civil society activists, faith leaders from different religions, youths and women in the skills to detect, prevent and mitigate political, religious and ethnic conflicts that can lead to violence. THP then forms a Peace Facilitator Group (PFG), consisting of 20 efficient members selected from the PAVE training programs, in each of its working Upazilas. Each PFG elects Peace Ambassadors who represent them at the district level Peace Ambassadors Network.

The PFG members work to foster peacebuilding, mitigate electoral and other violences, and transfer enhanced knowledge and skills through peacebuilding initiatives to the masses of the community for constructive and non-violent ways of citizen engagement. PFGs facilitated political rivals to sign Codes of Conduct in 20 Upazilas committing to peaceful resolution of disputes. Opposition leaders enjoy greater political space in PAVE areas.

Advocacy for Good Governance

SHUJAN: CITIZENS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE



1,310

UNITS

64 Districts, 432 Upazilas, 656 Unions

40,155

NETWORK
MEMBERS

SHUJAN: Citizens for Good Governance is the largest civil society organization of Bangladesh. THP serves as its secretariat, and our Country Director serves as its Secretary. Debuted in 2002, SHUJAN has played a key role in promoting democracy, decentralization, clean politics, good governance, fair elections and policy advocacy for reforms across the country.

As a non-partisan pressure group, SHUJAN provides an effective platform for people to discover their voices and be heard. Its volunteers are typically influential individuals at every level of society and play critical leadership roles in all its activities.

SHUJAN plays the role of-

A Decentralized Network of Committed Citizens: Since its inception, SHUJAN has mobilized thousands of citizens from all walks of life. It has become a large, decentralized network of committed individuals from the capital city down to the villages.

A Relentless Voice for Reforms: SHUJAN has pioneered a comprehensive package of reforms addressing the electoral process, the Election Commission and political parties. SHUJAN has relentlessly been articulating its voice for these reform issues through workshops, seminars and discussions across the country.

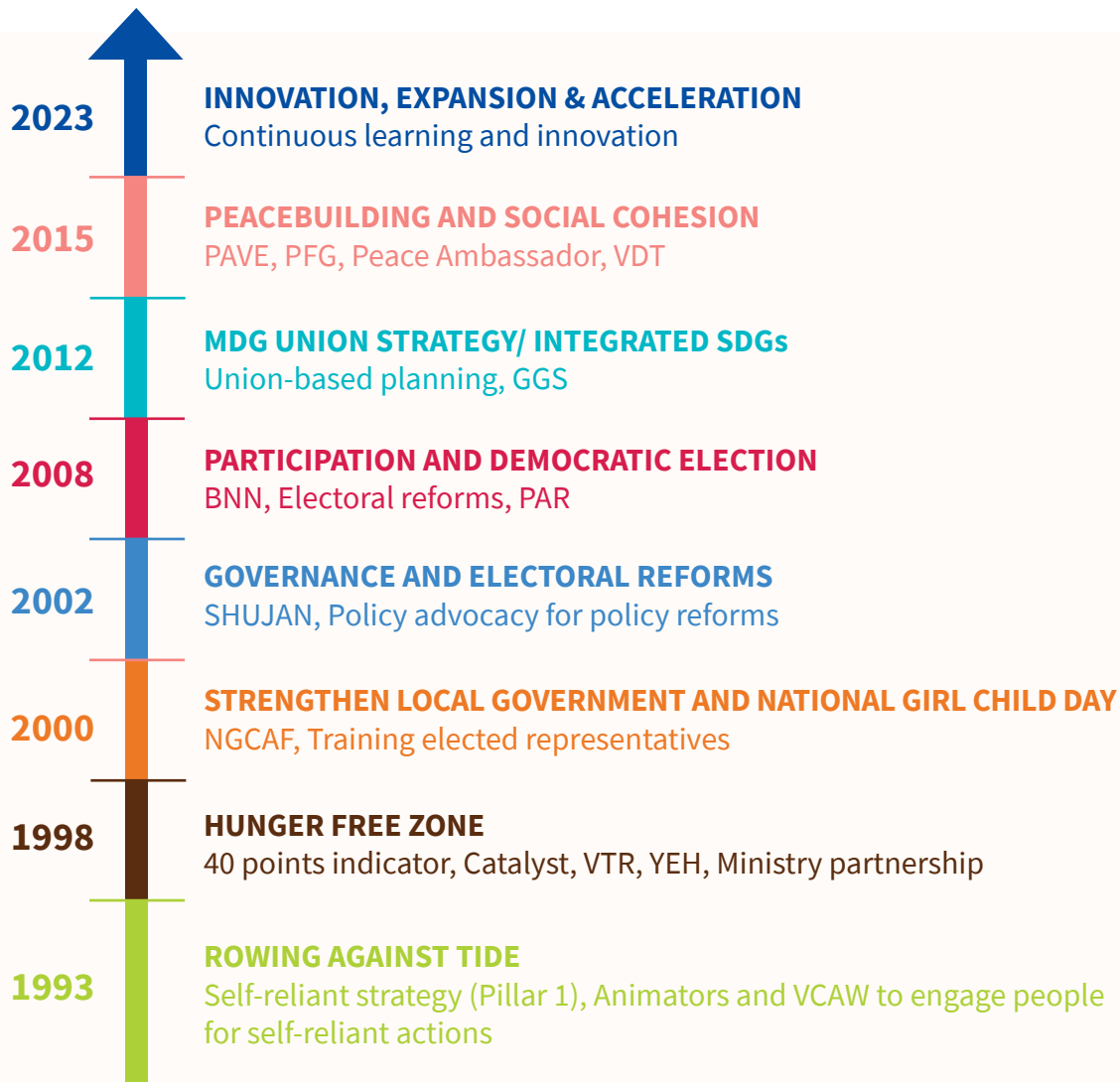
A Champion for Electoral Reforms: Since its inception, SHUJAN has persistently been working for free, fair and acceptable elections in Bangladesh. It has become a recognized expert by monitoring various pre to post election activities, analyzing the antecedents of the candidates, making the voters aware, organizing candidates-voters face to face programs, monitoring the Election Commission, analyzing the elections results etc.

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SHUJAN'S NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS AT A GLANCE



PHASES OF THP BANGLADESH'S JOURNEY



EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT, IMPACTFUL INDEPENDENT EVALUATOR'S NOTES

THP volunteers appear to have more **progressive attitudes and behaviors favoring gender equality** and women's empowerment when compared to non-THP individuals.

-2012; evaluating the invaluable: a rapid assessment of gender equality and women's empowerment in Bangladesh; sipa, Columbia university.

Evidence of how the **collective actions** of the local community and their elected representatives can bring about **greater local development that is both effective and inclusive.**

-2016; Strengthening Local Governance (SLG) evaluation report by Dr. Tofael Ahmed et al.

Residents... are **raising their voices**, individually or collectively, to mobilize their communities' people, especially women.

-2015; Qualitative Action Research on Results and Learning of Strengthening Local Governance Project by Prof. Pranab Pandey

Evaluators have also confirmed that the project **generated positive impact.** Evaluators also found **promising signs of sustainability.**

-2016; Evaluation Report by United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF).

EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT, IMPACTFUL INDEPENDENT EVALUATOR'S NOTES

“THP appears to have performed well. given such organisations to instigate, organise training and guide, the **social movement approach has many advantages** in terms of spread of effect. it is also clear that at the community level **separating hygiene, water and sanitation from other development issues does not make sense**. Sustainability considerations with regard to intended impacts on health through hygiene practices, sanitation and water would also point to **the social movement approach as a better option than hired NGOs**. Implementation of hygiene behavior takes a long time, and the continuous presence of local change agents is more likely to sustain this.”

- AusAid and Danida Commissioned Joint Review of the modalities of Hysawa - a joint water, sanitation and hygiene project of the Government of Bangladesh and Denmark.

The review recommended the expansion of the social mobilization approach as opposed to using hired NGOs to implement the project.



EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT, IMPACTFUL INDEPENDENT EVALUATOR'S NOTES

“...policy should **move beyond a sole focus on the low-income individual** and instead provide additional emphasis on the low-income community. Policy makers could implement changes that give individuals in low-income communities **more opportunities to develop community trust**. This can be achieved, for example, by increasing the opportunities for interaction or giving community members more say over decision making at the local level. The poor **may lack in material wealth** relative to the rich, but they possess **social wealth** in the shape of their communities upon which they can draw. Building and boosting community trust can help decrease myopic decision making and, in turn, **contribute to reducing the incidence of poverty** domestically and worldwide.”

- Written by Jon M. Jachimowicz and Salah Chafik from Columbia University, Sabeth Munrat from BRAC, Jaideep C. Prabhu from the University of Cambridge and Elke U. Weber from Princeton University, was published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.



21

OUR NEXT 5-YEAR STRATEGY



The first third of the SDG era was 2016-2020. COVID-19 made strategic planning nearly impossible in 2020, but THP globally set about the process of creating its next strategic plans.

We have declared our goal for 2026 is “3000 villages of 200 Unions in 20 Upazilas are fully mobilized to build as SDG Model Villages with particular focus on climate change, where people and their institutions will collaboratively act as agents of their own development, generating evidence for wider adoption of our strategy.”

OUR PARTNERS



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Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



The Asia Foundation
Improving Lives, Expanding Opportunities



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