



ECONOMIC
DEMOCRACY
INITIATIVE

Employment Generation Program for the Poorest Bangladesh

An off-season infrastructure improvement project implemented
during the Global Financial Crisis

Summary

This program targets the poorest, rural households in Bangladesh to provide employment during the off-season and develop community infrastructure and assets. Poor rural households are especially sensitive to changes in the prices of food and fuel - and price volatility is only expected to increase with climatic changes. The work projects are mostly basic infrastructure to mitigate disaster risk.

Rationale

Implemented in response to the food, fuel, and financial crisis of 2007-2008. These overlapping crises demonstrated the need for public-sector intervention and innovation to protect the most vulnerable rural populations.

Defining Principles

Generation of short-term employment opportunities and strengthening households' ability to cope with economic vulnerability.

Dates of Operation

2008 - present (1).

Number of Program Participants

1.9 million program participants in fiscal year 2021-2022 (2).

Person Days of Employment

50 million workdays per year as of 2021 (3).

Criteria for Participation

Members of households 18 to 60 years old with less than a half-acre of land and where head of household is a manual laborer (4). Applicants cannot receive any other government benefits (5). Rural citizens living in extreme poverty are targeted.

Pay and Benefits

BDT 16,000 for those who work both 40 day cycles as of 2021. This is below the market wage (6).



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Financing

BDT 19.25B fiscal year 2021-2022 (7). BDT 200 per working day in 2017 (8). Funding is allocated to administrative districts based on their poverty rates (9).

Implementation

Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief with support from the World Bank (10)

Types of Work

Manual work building rural community infrastructure projects decided upon by local communities and government bodies. Ninety-five percent of projects are to build and repair rural roads (11). Other public work projects include excavation for canals, footbridge construction, drainage development, and construction of rainwater reservoirs (12). The program may soon expand to include climate resilience projects.

Notable Features

Split into two, 40 day cycles; October to December and March to May – lean seasons. Each cycle offers forty days of employment. One third of all beneficiaries are women (13).

Challenges

Targeting of the poorest could still be improved, 29% of recipients were above the official poverty line in 2011 (14).

Program Website

<http://snsp.ddm.gov.bd/page/12?lang=en>



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