



BANZAid Projects

VISION

A world without poverty and oppression

MISSION

Working to transform communities for the poor and marginalised

PURPOSE

Supporting partners in developing countries; creating awareness in New Zealand about aid and development issues

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Solar Lighting—Bangladesh

In Bangladesh 53% of the population is still not connected to the national grid and receive no electricity. The majority of those not connected are rural families and poor families who cannot afford the connection.

This is not going to change in the near future and even if it does it will be at such a cost that the rural and urban poor will be unlikely to be able to avail themselves of the facilities. Clearly one answer for the problem lies in solar energy.

Our research indicates that existing solar power systems available in Bangladesh are too expensive for the poorer people to afford. They are 220volt systems designed to support the operation of TV and other electrical appliances, and they cost between Taka 15,000 and Taka 75,000 (NZ\$300-\$1500), and so are beyond the capacity of the really poor. Even a World Bank subsidised system still costs the purchaser Taka 32,000.

Dimensions Bangladesh is a local engineering company established by Kiwi entrepreneurs. They have experience in backup and alternative power generation systems. They have experimented with solar power for small households, and have a product that is both cheap enough to be widely affordable and which could also provide income through the establishment of assembly and sale centres in selected village areas.

The product developed by Dimensions is based on a 12 volt system using LED light strips and will only have the capacity to provide lighting and mobile phone charging

for a village household. The anticipated sales price for the unit is only Taka 7,500 (NZ\$150).

Poor rural households in Bangladesh currently use kerosene or candles for lighting. This is costly and limits evening activity. Use of this lighting unit will improve study conditions for school age children, and will enable other productive household activity.

In this project BANZAid will partner with Dimensions to establish the manufacture, distribution and sales systems for this product. Phase two of the project will see the establishment of small business units to handle local assembly, sale of the units, and after sales service. This will include training local entrepreneurs in the necessary installation and business skills.

The success of the project will be in the acceptance and takeup of the solar units by village households in the target economic range.

The project has received support from the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) of the New Zealand Aid Programme, and has already attracted the attention of other groups who see potential for solar power units of this size in other parts of the world.



Bangladesh has lifted itself from the 'basket case' category



Each [MPIL] enterprise has a spiritual and social conscience so that those who work for us or who we work to help, are given every opportunity to receive the economic, social, spiritual and environmental uplift they are entitled to

The Context

In the decades of the 1970s and 1980s, following independence from Pakistan, Bangladesh was often categorised as the 'basket case' of world poverty. Civil war, natural disasters, political instability, one of the highest population densities in the world, and a lack of natural resources other than the fertility of the river delta soil were all factors contributing to extreme poverty.

Slowly but steadily Bangladesh has lifted itself from the 'basket case' category. It is still among the poorer coun-

tries, but it is no longer right at the bottom of the heap!

Bangladesh has joined the global market, getting into the export manufacturing industry - mainly garments for the European and United States markets.

Bangladeshi expatriate worker remittances are one of the highest sources of foreign exchange with an estimated 6 million Bangladeshis working in the Middle Eastern countries.

Rural Bangladesh still lags behind the rest of the coun-

try. The national electric power grid does not reach 53% of the population. For many areas that do have access to the grid the supply is unreliable. National power production includes one small hydro scheme, some natural gas units, and the rest is oil burning, but the supply is far behind the demand.

This is the context for this project, which is to produce micro solar power lighting units at an affordable price.

The Partners—Dimensions Ltd

For the past 15 years New Zealand Baptist groups have been experimenting with business based approaches to working in the developing countries. The result of this has been the establishment of Marketplacers International Limited (MPIL). MPIL is 100% NZ owned, and is the parent company whose purpose is to mentor and facilitate local companies established in other countries.

Peter Mihaere, Chairman of the MPIL NZ Board says "[MPIL] has seven business enterprises across Asia and NZ from manufacturing & engineering to education & distribution. MPIL enterprises are fiscally responsible. Each are also responsible stewards of the environment, as they realise the need to be part of the answer not add to the problems. Each enterprise has a spiritual and

social conscience so that those who work for us or who we work to help, are given every opportunity to receive the economic, social, spiritual and environmental uplift they are entitled to." MPIL company profits are not repatriated to New Zealand, but are further invested in the needs of the countries where they are working.



Dimensions Ltd in Bangladesh is one of these MPIL companies. Dimensions was set up by Kiwi entrepreneurs as a light engineering company based in Dhaka Bangladesh. They have specialised in backup and alternative power generation

systems, and they have researched and developed the solar power unit which is proposed for this project. They need seed capital to enable them to set up the production and marketing of the unit. They have the vision to 'spin off' the assembly, sales and maintenance of the units in a franchising type arrangement to generate local employment and income in the village where the units are being sold.

BANZAid sees this as a pilot project for exploring the wider opportunities for innovative partnerships with the MPIL companies. Here is an opportunity to combine BANZAid's development sector knowledge and skills with MPIL business mentoring experience and to bring into this the funding and 'big picture' understanding of the New Zealand Aid Programme.

Other BANZAId Projects

Total Community Development Centres (TCDC) — Bangladesh

In the Total Community Development Centres (TCDC) project, Christian husband and wife teams go and live in each project village. With appropriate training, resourcing and support they help the community help itself.

Project activities include tuition groups for the children of poor families, adult literacy, teaching on basic healthcare and sanitation, and a savings scheme to facilitate micro-credit loans for income generating activities.

Coffee Trading Company — Papua New Guinea

The major cash crop for farmers in the remote Baiyer Valley of PNG is coffee. For a variety of reasons they have not done well from their coffee in recent years.

In February 2011 BANZAId signed an MOU with the Baptist Union of Papua New Guinea to set up a project to improve returns to coffee growers. The project will set up a coffee company to both help the growers improve the quality of their crop and improve the processing and marketing.

Satittoa Primary School— Samoa (Post 2009 tsunami reconstruction)

The Satittoa Village School was completely demolished by the September 2009 Pacific Tsunami. Working with NZ resident Samoans, BANZAId took on the project of relocating the school to a safer site, and rebuilding with improved facilities.

The new buildings were officially opened on the first anniversary of the tsunami - 29 September 2010. Landscaping and fencing the new school was completed in December 2010,



MISSIONS & DEVELOPMENT

BANGLADESH

For over 100 years the Baptist Churches of New Zealand have been committed to poverty alleviation as a necessary part of bringing the Good News of the Gospel to the countries where we have worked. This has included:

Relief, rehabilitation and medical assistance - responding to chronic poverty, especially following floods, cyclones and other natural disasters and seasonal shocks.

Sustainable rural development - 'Sustainable Garden and Village Livestock Project', improving human health through better protein food, providing village small business opportunities, and enhancing environmental protection (Papua New Guinea).

Cottage industries - 'Chandpur Cottage Industries' (CCI) focusing assistance to rural poor women through the production of jute based handicrafts (Bangladesh).

Revolving micro-finance - group formation and access to savings and credit (Bangladesh).

Educational activities - adult literacy, home-work tutors, and educational grants focusing on poor village children (Bangladesh, Tripura – India).

Schools and hospitals - establishing local educational and medical infrastructure (Bangladesh and Tripura).

Bangladesh Key Statistics

- **Population:** 150 million +
- **Area:** 144,000 sq km (about half the size of New Zealand)
- **Religions:** Muslim 86%, Hindu 13%, Christian 0.5%, Other 0.5%
- **Literacy:** 43% of those over the age of 15
- **Per Capita GDP:** US\$1400 (NZ GDP in 2006 was US\$24,400)



“Faith that doesn’t lead us to do good deeds is all alone and dead!” James 2:17 (CEV)



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Solar Project Budget

New Zealand Aid Programme funding for the project was received in November 2011. The specific project period is for 1 year, with the aim of becoming a self-sustaining business, able to continue to produce solar power units at an affordable price for rural Bangladesh households. Research and improvements to the product are also essential to the plan.

Budget Summary	NZ\$
Phase 1: Establishment of production and distribution systems	51,800
Phase 2: Set up, training and seed capital for rural business units	98,000
Research & Training	9,000
Monitoring & Evaluation	1,500
Dimensions Administration	288
Contingency and currency fluctuation	11,000
New Zealand based expenses	5,191
Total Budget	\$176,779

Find Out More about Global Poverty

Visit the BANZAid website for more. More about the projects that BANZAid is supporting. More news of current issues in development. More resources about development.

The **Projects** section of the website has information on our projects, both current and past. Here are real stories and photos from the people who benefit from the work that we are doing.

The **News** section has our own news stories, and also feeds from the Bangladesh media and from global development media.

The **Resources** section of our website is for people who want to know more about the issues of global poverty and development. This is a place where you can find articles on the issues, and links to statistics and analysis of what is being done around the world. Here you will find:

Articles - this section has articles on a variety of development issues. We aim to look at the issues from a Christian and Biblical perspective.

Downloads - there are three sections of downloads:
Documents: reports from our projects, and basic documents about BANZAid policies and projects;
Study Materials: downloadable documents on some of the hot issues in development, such as the impact of corporate tax evasion in the developing countries and the impact of the financial downturn;
Videos: downloadable videos that you can use in

your youth group or Church.

Photos - here are albums of photos from our projects. These will be regularly updated as we get new photos.

Videos - view videos here, both the ones that are available in the downloads section and others on poverty issues.

Links - the list of links starts with other Baptist organisations. We then have links to other sites with a Christian approach to development issues, before going on to a range of wider organisations, both New Zealand and international. Included here are some news sites, covering both current disaster situations and also relevant news of development issues.

New material is regularly added to the website. When new material is added we promote it with our email newsletter, to which you can subscribe through links on the site, or send us an email asking to be added to the list (info@banzaid.org.nz).



www.banzaid.org.nz