

Green Housing & Energy Limited

Dedicated to Sustainable Social Business



In partnership with Citi Foundation and Association for Underprivileged People (AUP)

Citi—GHEL Solar Project for Rural Microenterprises in Bangladesh

THE PROJECT

Bangladesh is suffering from a severe energy crisis which has proven one of the key hurdles to economic and social development. Since the national grid is inaccessible to 70 % of the nation's rural regions increased use of alternative energies is perhaps the only realistic solution to the energy shortage. The **Citi—GHEL Solar Project for Rural Microenterprises** was introduced in 2011 in selected villages around the country to give these communities access to electricity. The program was initiated by AUP, financed by Citi Foundation and executed by GHEL. The objectives of the project were kept in line with the key focus areas of Citi Foundation – the development of micro entrepreneurs and microenterprises.



THE ORGANIZATIONS

GHEL: Green Housing & Energy Limited (GHEL) is a sister concern of International Center for Microfinance and Social Enterprises (ICMSE). The aim of GHEL is to develop clean and affordable energy and low cost housing products through technology transfer and building partnerships with European companies to meet the social needs of low-income people and overcome the global environmental challenges due to climate changes.

AUP: Association for Underprivileged People (AUP) is a non-government, non-profit, socioeconomic development organization that was established in 1998 to help underprivileged and distressed people. The prime objective of AUP is to reduce levels of poverty through education, self-employment and empowerment of vulnerable people in society and ensuring their participation in contemporary developmental efforts and activities.

OBJECTIVES

- Direct support to microfinance clients by offering Solar Home Systems by which their families would have increased access to electricity.
- Enterprise development support to micro entrepreneurs by providing them training to enable the acquisition of new skills — making their businesses more productive and raising the income level of the entrepreneur.

Together with the Solar Home Systems, GHEL provided free training on their installation, functions and maintenance to women from remote rural locations. This approach allowed for further female empowerment— both economic and social – through additional income generating activities.

TARGET POPULATION AND AREAS OF INTERVENTION

The beneficiaries of the program have been mainly micro entrepreneurs and their households. The initiative targeted the villages of Motlab and Sengarchar in Chadpur District. These villages did not have access to the national electricity grid which severely restricted the people and the local entrepreneurs in their daily activities and business development efforts. Households in selected villages were provided with 20W Solar Home Systems and micro enterprises with 40W Solar Home Systems in order for them to be able to extend their business hours.

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BENEFICIARIES OF THE PROJECT

Result of Citi Foundation's contribution

- Reduced total cost of the product due to a 10% subsidy
- No down payment for the end user
- No interest expenses
- The client was enabled to make repayments solely from the cost savings on fuel expense

Environmental Impact

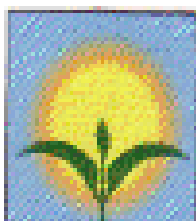
- Decreased the dependency on fossil fuel
- Contributed to the reduction of green-house gases

Economic Impact

- Low cost and reliable energy solutions
- Employment opportunities among the low-income community — especially women

Social Impact

- Improvement of living standards, access to information and levels of education in the targeted villages
- Reduced risks of health problem and fire hazards



KEY ACTIVITIES

1. Distribution of Solar Home Systems for microenterprises (40 watt)
2. Distribution of Solar Home System to micro entrepreneurs (20 watt)
3. Training of women on the installation and maintenance of Solar Home Systems
4. Campaigning and raising awareness on the benefits of using alternative energy in order to minimize the dependency on non-renewable energy

IMPACT AND BENEFITS

The project provided 369 rural **households** with Solar Home Systems. The total number of beneficiaries reached 1,845 people which includes the micro-entrepreneurs and their immediate family members. These people have seen their living standards rise substantially due to the access to solar energy that the Citi—GHREL Solar Project for Rural Microenterprises gave them access to.

Additionally, 141 **microenterprises** were provided solar home systems. Consequently another 987 people working for them have been directly benefited by the program. Access to light in the evening enabled them to extend working hours and to conduct their business activities more efficiently.

