

Strategic Policy for ARS-Bangladesh



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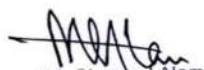
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Md. Shamsul Alam
Executive Director
ARS-Bangladesh



Introduction:

Founded in 1998 by visionary graduates from the University of Dhaka, under the leadership of Md. Shamsul Alam, the Association for Rural Society (ARS) Bangladesh is a prominent non-governmental organization (NGO) dedicated to empowering disadvantaged communities. With a comprehensive approach to addressing multifaceted challenges, ARS-Bangladesh tackles issues ranging from poverty and illiteracy to health hazards and discrimination. Our mission is to uplift the socio-economic status of marginalized populations, focusing on sustainable development and social justice.

ARS-Bangladesh envisions a Bangladesh characterized by democracy, justice, equality, empowerment, and freedom from poverty. The organization aims to empower marginalized and underprivileged communities nationwide by providing customized services and assistance to facilitate sustainable socio-economic advancement. This includes financial aid, housing, agricultural support, healthcare, education, sanitation, gender parity, sustainable household solutions, environmental projects, and human rights initiatives.

Governance and Management:

ARS-Bangladesh prioritizes good governance, accountability, and transparency. Our organizational structure includes a General Committee, an Executive Committee, and a Secretariat, each with distinct roles and responsibilities to ensure effective decision-making and implementation.

General Committee: Comprising 15 members, this committee meets annually to approve activities and strategic decisions.

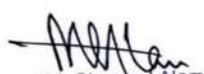
Executive Committee: Consisting of 5 elected members, this committee is responsible for decision-making, fund-raising, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Secretariat: Led by the Executive Director, the Secretariat manages the implementation of development programs and projects, ensuring alignment with organizational goals and community needs.

ARS-Bangladesh, registered with the Department of Social Services, Government of Bangladesh, No. A-04165, dated 28 June 1998. The organization was registered on 7 April 2009 by the NGO Affairs Bureau, Prime Minister's Office, under number 2426 and from the Microcredit Regulatory Authority under number 02814-03211-00405 on 12 May 2009. The organization's partners include the Ministry of Women & Child Affairs, Ministry of Fisheries & Livestock, Infrastructure Development Company Limited, Dollar A Day (Australia), TIDES Foundation (USA), and Disability Rights Fund (USA). It collaborates with at least 10 commercial banks in Bangladesh for financial support and management.

Strategic Objectives

1. **Empower Communities to Adapt to Climate Change and Environmental Challenges:**
 - Promote community-based adaptation and disaster management mechanisms.


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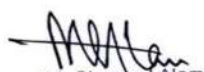


- Implement sustainable environmental practices to mitigate deterioration.
- 2. Foster Entrepreneurship and Economic Self-Sufficiency:**
 - Support income-generating activities to enhance economic stability.
 - Provide micro-credit to aspiring entrepreneurs.
- 3. Develop Vocational and Life Skills:**
 - Offer comprehensive training programs to create self-employment opportunities.
 - Focus on skill development to improve employability.
- 4. Enhance Agricultural Productivity and Food Security:**
 - Encourage sustainable agricultural practices.
 - Support fisheries and livestock development.
- 5. Improve Access to Education:**
 - Provide both formal and informal educational opportunities.
 - Focus on life skills and basic education.
- 6. Promote Health and Hygiene:**
 - Increase community awareness and access to essential health services.
 - Implement programs to improve hygiene and sanitation.
- 7. Advocate for Rights and Social Justice:**
 - Enhance community capacity to advocate for women's, children's, and persons with disabilities' rights.
 - Promote gender equality and social inclusion.

Programs and Activities

A. Development Programs

- 1. Integrated Cow Rearing & Biogas Plant:** Advancing sustainable agricultural practices by combining livestock rearing with biogas production, providing renewable energy and organic fertilizers.
- 2. Solar Irrigation for Farmers:** Introducing solar-powered irrigation systems to increase agricultural productivity and farmer incomes.
- 3. Awareness of Climate Change & Resilience:** Promoting climate change awareness and community resilience strategies to mitigate environmental impacts.
- 4. Tobacco Control and Compliance:** Advocating for tobacco control measures to enhance public health outcomes.
- 5. Road Safety Program:** Enhancing road safety through awareness campaigns and infrastructure improvements.


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6. **Improved Cook-Stoves:** Introducing efficient cook-stove technologies to combat indoor air pollution and improve health outcomes.

B. Micro-Finance Programs

1. **Micro-Enterprise Loan Program:** Empowering entrepreneurs with financial resources to start or expand small businesses, driving local economic growth and job creation.
2. **Income Generating Activities:** Cultivating sustainable income sources for individuals and communities, contributing to poverty reduction and economic stability.
3. **Poverty Alleviation Program:** Addressing the root causes of poverty through skills training, employment opportunities, and social support services.
4. **Agriculture Program:** Facilitating agricultural development through training, access to inputs, and market linkages to bolster food security and livelihoods.

C. Capacity Building and Training

1. **Staff Capacity Building:** Regular training sessions, workshops, and meetings to enhance professional skills and knowledge in microfinance management, savings, entrepreneurship, basic accounting, computer applications, office management, and M&E.
2. **Community Training:** Providing training to community members to build vocational and life skills, promoting self-employment and economic self-sufficiency.

D. Health and Education Initiatives

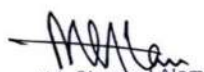
1. **Health Services Access:** Increasing community awareness and access to vital health and hygiene services through targeted outreach programs.
2. **Educational Programs:** Offering combined formal and non-formal education to promote basic and life skills education.

E. Advocacy and Rights Protection

1. **Gender Parity and Social Inclusion:** Promoting gender equality and advocating for the rights of women, children, and persons with disabilities.
2. **Human Rights Initiatives:** Enhancing community capacity to advocate for social justice and human rights.

F. Environmental and Climate Resilience

1. **Climate Change Adaptation:** Implementing community-based adaptation and disaster management mechanisms to address environmental challenges and climate change effects.
2. **Sustainable Practices:** Promoting sustainable household solutions and environmental projects to mitigate environmental deterioration.


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Geographic Coverage

ARS-Bangladesh operates in 12 south-west districts of Bangladesh, providing services to both rural and urban areas.

Beneficiaries

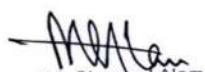
ARS-Bangladesh serves a total of 38,755 beneficiaries, with a focus on women, children, and individuals with disabilities.

Future Plans

1. Social Rehabilitation & Physiotherapy Services
2. Elderly Care Facilities
3. Special Needs School and Resource Center
4. Agro Product Processing & Marketing Initiatives
5. Rural Information and Career Services
6. Promotion of Green Energy & Eco-friendly Agriculture
7. Climate Change Adaptation Training & Resource Center

Strategic Policy Implementation

- 1. Governance and Leadership:**
 - Ensure strong governance practices with clear roles and responsibilities for the General Committee, Executive Committee, and Secretariat.
 - Maintain transparency and accountability in all operations and decision-making processes.
- 2. Community Engagement and Empowerment:**
 - Foster community participation in program design, implementation, and evaluation.
 - Empower marginalized groups through targeted interventions and advocacy efforts.
- 3. Program Effectiveness and Sustainability:**
 - Implement evidence-based programs that address the root causes of socio-economic challenges.
 - Promote sustainable development practices to ensure long-term impact.
- 4. Capacity Building:**
 - Invest in staff training and development to enhance organizational capacity.
 - Build community capacity through education, training, and resource provision.


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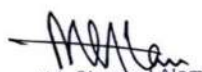
5. **Partnerships and Collaboration:**
 - Strengthen partnerships with government agencies, development partners, and financial institutions.
 - Engage in national and international networks to leverage resources and expertise.
6. **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning:**
 - Establish robust M&E systems to track program progress and impact.
 - Use M&E data to inform program improvements and strategic decision-making.
7. **Financial Management:**
 - Ensure sound financial management practices, including transparent budgeting, accounting, and reporting.
 - Diversify funding sources to ensure financial sustainability.

Monitoring and Evaluation

1. **Performance Indicators:**
 - Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor the effectiveness of programs and initiatives.
 - Regularly review and update KPIs to reflect program goals and objectives.
2. **Feedback Mechanisms:**
 - Implement a Community Feedback and Response Mechanism (CFRM) to gather and address community feedback.
 - Use feedback to improve program relevance, effectiveness, and quality.
3. **Continuous Improvement:**
 - Regularly review and update the strategic policy based on feedback, evaluation results, and changing community needs.
 - Promote a culture of continuous learning and improvement within the organization.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. **CFRM Coordinator:**
 - Oversee the implementation and operation of the CFRM.
 - Ensure all feedback is documented, analyzed, and addressed promptly.
 - Report regularly to senior management on the status and effectiveness of the CFRM.
2. **Feedback Officers:**
 - Receive and document feedback from various channels.
 - Ensure confidentiality and respectful handling of all feedback.


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- Assist in analyzing feedback and developing action plans.

3. Community Liaison Officers:

- Promote the CFRM within the community.
- Facilitate community meetings and workshops.
- Provide support to community members in using the feedback channels.

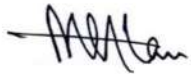
4. Senior Management:

- Provide strategic direction and support for the CFRM.
- Ensure the necessary resources are allocated for its effective implementation.
- Review reports and make decisions based on feedback analysis.

Conclusion

ARS-Bangladesh is dedicated to catalyzing positive change in rural communities through holistic development initiatives. Guided by principles of good governance, accountability, transparency, and community empowerment, we continue to make significant contributions towards creating a more equitable and sustainable society in Bangladesh. By implementing this strategic policy, ARS-Bangladesh aims to further its mission and vision, ensuring that the most vulnerable populations are empowered and uplifted. Through ongoing engagement, strategic partnerships, and a commitment to excellence, ARS-Bangladesh is poised to make a lasting impact on the socio-economic landscape of Bangladesh.

Approved by:



Md. Shamsul Alam

Executive Director

Date: 20.05.2020

