

USAID AND BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT SIGN NEW AGREEMENT TO CONTINUE EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS



Secretary of ERD Mr. Md. Ismail Zabiullah and USAID Mission Director Gene V. George were present to sign the new joint agreement for continuing USAID educational development programs.

DHAKA, SEPTEMBER 26 -- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of Bangladesh signed a formal agreement to continue joint development activities in the education sector. At a signing ceremony at the Economic Relations Division (ERD) headquarters, officials from ERD and USAID signed the new agreement under which USAID will provide a total of US \$13 million towards early childhood education programs from now until September 30, 2011.

USAID's early childhood education program focuses on children between the ages 3 to 6 to improve their reading and math skills, which help prepare them for success in primary education. Key programs include the production of Sisimpur, the popular children's educational television program which airs on Bangladesh Television (BTV). USAID also supports the SUCCEED preschool education program, which uses innovative teaching techniques and games to teach children how to read and how to count. These programs complement the Government of Bangladesh's Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-II) and give children a head start in learning and build a solid foundation as they begin their primary education.

USAID is the principal U.S. Government agency that provides development assistance in more than 100 countries around the world. From 1971 to 2006, USAID has provided over \$5 billion in development assistance, with over half of that amount in food aid. In 2006, USAID provided \$75 million in development assistance to Bangladesh.

USAID support is dedicated to promote democratic institutions and practices, expand economic opportunity and invest in human capital to improve the lives of the people in Bangladesh. Current programs address needs in areas including health and family planning, disaster management, income generation, food security, small business and agribusiness development, natural resources management, rural electrification and energy sector reform, democracy and human rights, and education.

USAID utilizes local expertise and works through a variety of entities including non-governmental organizations, private firms, and also works closely with the Government of Bangladesh and other donors. Nearly 80 percent of all people implementing USAID activities in Bangladesh are Bangladeshi natives.

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Note: *A Bangla translation of this article is also available from the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section (Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov)*