

## 1. Introduction

In 1995 a group of experienced development workers put their commitment to Bangladesh into practice by establishing Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), an independent UK-registered charity.

Our vision is of a world in which everyone can thrive.

At DAM UK we support local efforts that challenge poverty and inequality. We focus our efforts on ensuring that everyone in Bangladesh enjoys the benefits of quality education, good health and economic development. And we provide humanitarian assistance to communities in Bangladesh at times of crisis.

We see our work as contributing to the Global Goals' ambition that 'no-one is left behind'.

We work in partnership with Dhaka Ahsania Mission, a leading Bangladesh-registered charity that has delivered quality development programmes since 1958.

**This Impact Review summarises the difference made by DAM UK's work from 2015-20, coinciding with our last strategic cycle.**

We recognise that the term 'impact' means different things to different people. For the purposes of this review we understand impact to mean both the immediate and longer-term changes that result from an intervention. This report draws upon the assessment of impact recorded in project records, in external verification reports and, most importantly, by project beneficiaries themselves.

## 2. Making a Difference

DAM UK income:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
£'000	204	246	490	182	210	280	<b>1,612</b>

Expenditure by sector\*:

	Education	Humanitarian	Health	Economic Development
	62%	24%	11%	3%

\* Classification based upon each project's primary sector

## Education

### Context:

*The United Nations' Global Goals call for inclusive and equitable quality education for all. Yet in Bangladesh, 6.7 million children are out-of-school and 13% of children are involved in child labour (UNICEF). Despite having made great progress in increasing school enrolment over recent years, progress has stalled and the Government of Bangladesh is struggling to get the last 15% of children, the hardest-to-reach, into primary education.*

DAM UK works to ensure that out-of-school children can access quality education. At the core of our work are DAM's innovative learning centres, called *Ganokendra*, which typically provide primary and junior-secondary education and life skill training. In Dhaka city the *Ganokendra* model has been adapted to meet the needs of children living on the streets through the additional provision of drop-in facilities such as health care, counselling, food provision and shelter.

Expenditure: £963k	Deliverables include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 urban community learning centres</li> <li>• 2 drop-in centres for street &amp; working children</li> </ul>
People reached: 3,641 out-of-school children received primary or secondary education  924 out-of-school children received vocational training	
Evidence of impact:  Having received encouragement, personalised support and quality education with DAM, 924 children, all previously out-of-school, went on to continue their education with a formal education or vocational training provider.	

## Humanitarian Response

DAM UK responded to humanitarian crises, most notably the arrival in Bangladesh of almost one million Rohingya refugees (from 2017 onwards), riverine flooding (2020) and the COVID 19 pandemic (2020).

Expenditure £366k	Deliverables include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 304 toilets constructed/rehabilitated</li> <li>• 11 deep tubewells constructed</li> <li>• 1 health camp</li> <li>• 4,420 food parcels distributed</li> <li>• 5,280 emergency response packs</li> </ul>
People reached 64,942	

	distributed (varied by project, but packs included COVID response kits, seeds & tools for post-flood rehabilitation and fuel efficient stoves for Rohingya refugees)
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## Health

### **Context:**

*Despite considerable progress in the past 20 years, in Bangladesh still 74 million people (48% of the population) are drinking unclean water (World Bank) - water contaminated with health-harming microbes (e.g. E.coli), naturally occurring heavy metals (e.g. arsenic, iron) or salt. Ill health caused by drinking contaminated water limits opportunities to attend school, earn an income or contribute to society; intestinal infections caused by drinking dirty water impair nutrient absorption and healthy growth.*

DAM UK has been providing support to rural communities that lack universal access to clean water. A variety of water lifting and filtration technologies have been used according to the local population and geological circumstances.

Expenditure: £170k	<p><b>Evidence of impact:</b></p> <p>To ensure that the full benefits of improved water and sanitation facilities are realised, DAM complements hardware provision with training and community mobilisation to promote improved hygiene practice.</p> <p>In one project, DAM UK provided 290 latrines for particularly poor households. But as a result of the training and community mobilisation, a further 1,878 households improved their own household latrines.</p> <p>In another project, at the time of the baseline survey only 17% of households were disposing of child faeces in a latrine. Following training and mobilisation, this had increased to 85% by the end of the project.</p>
<p>People reached:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24,890 with access to clean water</li> <li>• 9,758 with access to an improved latrine</li> <li>• 13,642 attended hygiene training</li> </ul>	

## Economic Development

Expenditure: £49k	Deliverables include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 lead farmers (women) trained as peer-trainers</li> <li>• 68 agricultural demonstration plots established</li> <li>• 884 farmer field days held</li> <li>• 21,638 farmers attended field-based training</li> <li>• 1,000 women farmers provided with agricultural input package</li> </ul>
People reached: 64,942	
Evidence of impact:  In a project to support women in agriculture, following training provided by local lead farmers, rice yield increased by 22% compared to baseline. By the end of the project there was a 14% increase in the land available for women-led farming.	

### 3. Lessons Learnt

Experience gained from supporting initiatives in Bangladesh since 1995 has shaped DAM UK's latest strategy, for the period 2021 – 25. Lesson learnt include:

- Strong local community oversight has been a crucial success factor. Local voluntary management committees (for instance at water points or *Ganokendra*) have raised awareness of the project's aims, addressed any local concerns, provided a route for feedback and mobilised resources.
- The changing climate continues to increase the likelihood and impact of riverine flooding and cyclonic events in Bangladesh, threatening to undermine development gains.
- Experience from using a range of water lifting and filtration technology ensures that appropriate technology is used according to local community and geological factors.
- Rapid urbanisation has resulted in people living in towns and cities having lower access to clean water than those in rural areas. DAM UK's WASH programming will pivot to urban areas as a response.
- With community-level and inter-agency networks across Bangladesh and extensive humanitarian response experience, DAM is an effective first-responder at that time of crisis.
- Institutional donors are increasingly paying funds in arrears. DAM UK's ability to pre-finance grants pending the arrival of donor funds is important in ensuring the timely delivery of services to project participants.

## **Delivering our Plans: Strategy Review 2015-20**

Our Strategy 2015 – 20 was underpinned by four strategic objectives, progress against which is evidenced below.

### **(i) Grow Funding**

*Objective: Maintain and strengthen existing funding streams. Expand and diversify funding sources.*

Evidence:

- DAM UK's income is trending upwards: average income during the six years 2015 – 2020 was £269k compared to £162k in the preceding six years.
- DAM UK has successfully diversified its funding portfolio, most notably with successful partnerships established with donors including Human Appeal and Read Foundation. In 2020, DAM UK was in the final stages of securing UK Aid funding for the first time, though budget cuts at FCDO ultimately prevented this project from starting.

### **(ii) Deepen partnership with DAM Bangladesh**

*Objective: Foster strong multi-level working relationships, jointly develop programmes, and act as a critical friend and partner.*

Evidence:

- The DAM UK/DAM partnership has been formalised through the signing of a joint Memorandum of Understanding and each initiative is guided by a project agreement.
- Both organisations have contributed to the other's strategy renewal processes. DAM personnel routinely participate at DAM UK's Council of Management.
- Both partners contribute to project development processes and there are joint efforts to reflect on lessons learnt.

### **(iii) Resilience**

*Objective: Develop people, processes and infrastructure. Ensure strong governance, robust decision-making and sound financial management*

Evidence:

- DAM UK has strengthened governance and management processes including budgeting and financial reporting and risk management. DAM UK's policy framework, including safeguarding, has been renewed. The Council of Management, including its Strategy & Finance Committees, continues to play a strong and engaged governance role.
- DAM UK's unrestricted reserves increased over the period, strengthening resilience and enabling DAM UK to pre-finance projects where donor funding is paid in arrears.

### **(iv) Raise visibility**

*Objective: Build a strong network of relationships with wider stakeholders and create partnerships in the UK and Bangladesh for the delivery of Bangladesh-based programmes. Raise wider awareness of DAM and garner support for its work*

Evidence:

- The Vision, Purpose & Values of DAM UK have been refreshed. DAM UK has developed a website and logo, increasing brand awareness.
- DAM UK is an active participant in BOND and other sector networks.