




Prioritizing the right education interventions will help move Bangladesh closer to achieving the goals of Vision 2021.

The Bangladesh Priorities project worked with economists from Bangladesh, South Asia, and around the world to study 76 concrete solutions to improve the future of the country. Using cost benefit analysis, the researchers identify how much social, economic and environmental good is achieved for each taka spent, providing policy makers with the most relevant information and analysis to support their decision-making. Based on this analysis, an Eminent Panel considered all the research in detail, and prioritized the 76 solutions. This series of policy briefs focuses on the most important priorities for Bangladesh, from tackling tuberculosis to education, health and digital governance.

Strategy	Takas of benefits per taka spent	
Psychosocial stimulation for stunting		18 taka / taka
Group and teach according to ability		12 taka / taka
Improving education for girls		5 taka / taka

THE BENEFITS OF EDUCATION

Lack of access to education opportunities and low education quality contribute to poor maternal and child health, and education outcomes; it entails significant intergenerational repercussions. Interventions that directly affect human development outcomes – the four discussed interventions in this brief – will have higher BCRs than reported here because it has many other spillover effects. The underlying rationale for prioritizing interventions is that no country has the resources or time to implement all solutions. Also, there is no one single solution that will address all dimensions of education.

Having achieved the two MDGs related to primary schooling - universal enrolment and gender equality – and striving for a middle income within a perceivable future, Bangladesh is well-positioned to focus on improving the quality of education and access under an integrated, life-cycle approach, prioritizing further accumulation of human capital through investment in smart education and skill formation strategies.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

PRIORITIZING PSYCHOSOCIAL STIMULATION

The current economics of education literature suggests there is a higher return in education, the earlier in life one makes those investments. The importance of early childhood development (ECD) is crucial: early development means higher educational achievement, higher productivity through more future income, and possibly better health outcomes.

In Bangladesh, the cost of implementing an ECD programme with psychosocial stimulation component is one hour per week, for a social worker for each child, which would equal Tk.12,450 per child, each year. An estimated wage increase of nearly 20 percent is worth more than Tk. 1.5 million (Tk. 15 lakh) for each child over their working career.

Each taka spent on psychosocial stimulation as part of ECD would achieve Tk. 18 of benefits.

PRIORITIZE “STREAMING”

Pedagogical innovations are important and can be considered as smart interventions. “Streaming” or **reassigning students into groups in relation to their levels of educational attainment, can increase student achievement** in a cost-effective manner.

In Bangladesh, every Tk. 7,800 spent on **reassigning students according to their achievement levels could increase student test scores** by nearly two standard deviations, which is correlated with earning higher future wages. The money can be spent throughout the five years of primary schooling and also allow for hiring more teachers.

Each taka spent toward these efforts would do about Tk. 12 of good.

PRIORITIZING SECONDARY GIRLS’ EDUCATION

Female stipend programmes can reach a large segment of the population and contribute to human capital development. The **impact goes beyond child nutritional gains**, such as the income gains that are attributed to an extra year of education. A decision to invest in women’s education tends to compete with marriage decisions. By encouraging girls to enrol and stay in school through more stipends, the early marriage decision can be mitigated. Early marriage entails life-long devastating impacts for women: lower education levels and lower lifetime earnings, greater risk of dying from pregnancy complications, and increased mortality rates for the children of these young brides.

Each taka spent to get girls more education does 5 takas of social good, thanks to improved child health and increased income from higher earnings.

PRIORITIZING HARD-TO-REACH AREAS

This particular intervention needs to address both the supply-side (building more schools) and demand-side (designing programmes to attract girls from such communities) problems. Attention needs to be closely paid to stipend programmes and other tailor-made programmes

which can influence parents to postpone their girls’ marriages as they become convinced of the potential of investing in their girls’ education.

Each taka spent to get girls in hard-to-reach areas is likely to **generate more than 5 takas of social good.**

OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2017

The upcoming Education Act in Bangladesh is an opportunity for prioritizing the smartest education interventions identified in this brief. Taking advantage of recent evidence on the effectiveness of different education interventions can support **Bangladesh’s achievement of Vision 2021 and help the nation reach middle-income status.**



With support from SIDA, Bangladesh

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