

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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Mati
Bangladesh
Self Defined Rural Development

Table of Contents

Message from the Executive Director	3
MATI Program Highlights 2024	4
An Overview of MATI	6
Our Programs	9
Our Programs Partners	9
1. Economic Development & Social Security Program	10
1.1 Cooperative Development	10
1.2 Value Chain Development	10
1.3 Model SDG Village Development	11
1.4 Paranta Bela: Support to Elderly People	12
2. Agriculture & Food Security Program	13
2.1.1 Encourage Youth in Organic Agriculture	13
2.1.2 Demonstration on Home-based Storage System	13
2.1.3 Develop Community-based Organic Seed Bank	14
2.1.4 Establish Co-op based Processing Centre.....	15
2.2 Safe Food Value Chain Development	15
2.3 Establish Food Forest for Biodiversity Conservation	15
3. Health & WASH Program	16
3.1 MPHCC Head Office and HK Sherpur	16
3.2 MATI Eye Care Centre, HK	17
3.3 Physiotherapy for Children with Special Needs	17
3.4 WASH Activities	18
3.5 Establishment of Pharmacy & Outpatient Clinic	18
4. Quality Education & Human Resource Development	19
4.1 Projapati Daycare Centers	19
4.2 Construction of a Daycare Centre	19
4.3 MATI Eco-Primary School	20
4.4 Student Support Program (SSP)	21
4.5 Scholarship for Paramedic Students	22
4.6 School Lunch Program	22
4.7 Vocational Training for Youth	23
5. Environment, Climate & Disaster Management	24
5.1 Awareness Campaigns	24
5.2 Clean City Campaign	24
5.3 Climate Change Network Development	25
5.4 Afforestation	25
6. Research, Advocacy & Campaign Program	26
6.1 Research on Safe Chicken Value Chain	26
6.2 Advocacy & Campaign for Renewable Energy	26

MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

At MATI, we place a strong emphasis on nurturing our own team, fostering a MATI family that will carry our mission forward. Our commitment to developing future leaders is reflected in various programs, particularly those aimed at Mati women cooperative or education programs.

The MATI Eco Village embodies a social impact of climate change and sustainable development in an environment steeped in MATI's values and culture.

I firmly believe that every individual holds immense potential, no matter their background. MATI serves as a dynamic platform to unlock that potential and turn our shared goals into reality.

It brings me great joy to present the 2023 Annual Report, marking yet another challenging year. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our development partners, our dedicated staff, the communities we serve, and the government and local authorities—including NGOAB, the Department of Social Services, local administration offices for their unwavering support.

Our overseas partner played a Vital sign for our work in Bangladesh with our deprived community.

As we look ahead, our top priority remains achieving the Sustainable Development Goals well before the 2030 deadline. We are confident that with the continued support of all MATI stakeholders, our journey will be both impactful and fulfilling.

With sincere thanks,

Lenen Rahaman
Founder Executive Director
MATI Bangladesh



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS IN 2023

A. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY PROGRAM

Cooperative Development Program

Cooperative development is the key approach of MATI for holistic development of the poor and extreme poor people. So far, 2,283 women members are organized across 26 villages and 5 wards of Mymensingh City Corporation under Mymensingh Sadar and Nakla Upazila of Mymensingh and Sherpur districts respectively. In 2023 the co-op members have accumulated a savings of BDT 65,02,690 which was disbursed as loan among the members. In 2023, BDT 1,51,40,792 were disbursed for supporting investments in agriculture, crop preservation, agro-based entrepreneurship, small businesses, and other different other livelihood improvement activities. This initiative led to higher incomes, improved health, better sanitation (WASH), enhanced education, and overall well-being and most importantly women empowerment.

Model SDG Village Development

In 2023, SDG Village Development initiatives engaged 290 members across five villages, facilitating savings and provided credit to 141 families, enabling income-generating activities like livestock rearing, small businesses, and land leasing. Additionally, 25 water pumps and toilets were installed with family contributions. MATI's healthcare team offered bi-weekly medical support, while women received agricultural training for kitchen gardening and income generation. To reduce early marriage, girls received educational support, and awareness programs addressed dowry, eve-teasing, and drug addiction in schools.

Poronto Bela

MATI supports vulnerable elders in Bangladesh, recognizing their right to live with dignity. Many older Bangladeshis depend on their children, creating hardship for both. Impoverished families often struggle to meet the basic needs and healthcare requirements of aging relatives. Since 2010, MATI has provided a small monthly allowance to a limited number of elders, a program continued in 2023 despite funding challenges, with hopes of future expansion. Beyond the allowance, MATI's health program offers specialized care and helps elders access the government's Elderly Allowance.

B. AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY PROGRAM

Encourage youth in Organic Agriculture

In 2023, total 81 youth farmers (46M, 35F) are motivated and trained for organic farming as a solution to food security and climate change. They received training, technical support and materials for organic farming, set demo plots, and showcased organic pest control and manure production to grow organic crops and

Demonstrations on home-based storage System:

In 2023, total 50-woman farmers were motivated and trained to store their crops and sell at higher prices during off-season. They received support with drying and storage materials to store crops like mustard, rice, and chili during the reporting period.

Develop community based organic seed bank

Community based organic seed banks are being established in 3 villages in Mymensingh and Sherpur to enhance farmers' seed rights and availability of quality seeds, with support for storage materials and the collection of endangered indigenous crop species.

Establish Co-op based processing Centre

In 2023, a co-op based processing center is established in MATI Eco-village, Huzurikanda under Nakla Upazila of Sherpur district in order to support the cooperative to establish their value chain of safe food. The processing center is equipped with Mustard crushing machine, spices grinding machine such as Chili, Turmeric and Coriander, Black gram crushing machine and also bottling and packaging machines and facilities. The processing center has also a storage facility of about 500 mounds of crops.

Safe Food Value Chain Development

In 2023, the farmers' cooperative has already started processing, packaging and marketing their crops to sell directly to the consumers. The initial products are Mustard oil, chili powder, Turmeric powder, Coriander powder, Black gram etc. Besides, three types of tea namely Rosella, Lemon grass and Tulsi (holy basil) are being processed. The promotional activities of the products are going on through online and also off-line participating in different district level agricultural fairs.

Establish Food Forest for Biodiversity Conservation

In 2023, a food forest has been established in the MATI Eco-village where more than 1000 saplings of more than 300 species and varieties of fruits and medicinal plants, wood and ornamental trees have been planted on around 4 acres of land. These trees will play significant role in supplying food for large number of flora and fauna which are under threat of extinction.

C. HEALTH AND WASH PROGRAM

Achievements in 2023

- Health Awareness Meeting & Train.: 185 (7536 patients)
- Eye Screening Camp: 49 (approx. 13225 patients)
- Eye Center Patients: 2864 patients
- Spectacle's support: 422 patients
- Identification of Cataract: 415 patients
- Eye Screened in the Field: 13225 patients
- Free Medicine received: 2834 patients
- Cataracts Operation: 198 elderly patients

D. QUALITY EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Projapoti Daycare Centers

In 2023, MATI continued to run 5 rural daycare centers (DCC) including one for disabled children. Total 178 children from disadvantaged families are getting early childhood development services in the DCCs by following the world-renowned child-centered Swiss teaching method called “Essence of Learning (EoL)” by the teachers who are trained by Ms. Beatrice Rutishauser of Switzerland who is the innovator of the method.

Construction of a Daycare building

In 2023, MATI has constructed a new 5-storied building with Eco-block in Gohaikandi, Mymensingh

Mati Eco-Primary School, Huzurikanda

In 2023, total 145 students (68 are boys and 77 girls) are getting quality education upto Class-V and ecological awareness in the Mati Eco-Primary School, Huzurikanda under Nakla upazila of Sherpur district. The children are getting quality education and early childhood development training by following the EoL method.

Student Support Program (SSP)

In 2023, total 241 children (36 boys and 205 girls) from extremely poor families received monthly stipend of BDT 500 to 1000 each to continue their education. Four development partners of MATI namely Stiftung 100, Stiftung Brücke, Stiftung Balingen and MATI e.v. supported the SSP.

Student Scholarship for Paramedic Course

In 2023, total 10 paramedic students were supported Mymensingh's to complete their coursework from Rumdo Nursing College (Medical Assistant Training Institute). They are working practically at the Mati's Health Center for on-the-experience learning.

Vocational Training

For turning the frustrated and unemployed youth forces into skilled working force MATI has been running different vocational courses in the working area. In 2023, total 820 trainees (214 boys and 606 girls) received training on the 360 hrs trade courses of computer application, Carpentry, Beauty parlor, Welding, Bicycle repairing and sewing etc.

E. ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE & DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Awareness Campaign on Climate Change

Awareness on causes and effects of climate change as well as soil and environment is mainstreamed within MATI with all the programmatic and organizational

activities. Like every year many awareness raising activities were implemented in 2023 such as cooperative group meeting, SSP student meeting, sessions in different trainings on agri-ecology & organic farming, leaflet distribution, environment day observation, bicycle rally, school & college level awareness meeting, etc.

Clean City Campaign

Like every year clean city campaign was held to raise peoples' awareness on waste solid waste management and cleanliness. 30 children and teenagers aged between 5 and 25 years, who regularly motivate their neighbors with small actions to keep the area clean.

Climate Change Network Development

MATI has initiated and hosting the Secretariat of the regional level network on climate change namely “Climate Change Network in Greater Mymensingh-CCNGM”. The network is composed of 65 grassroots level NGOs working in Mymensingh division. Mr Lenen Rahman, the ED of MATI is the Chairperson of the Network. The network is primarily engaged in advocacy and public awareness campaigns on the issue of climate change. In 2023, the network was very much active in the campaign for green and equitable energy transition in Bangladesh in collaboration with other national and international level networks.

Afforestation

Like every year MATI, the member organizations of CCNGM network, SSP & MATI Eco-school students as well as the community people planted hundreds of thousands of saplings in 2023. Moreover, MATI encouraged the mass people for plantation through the plantation awareness events, leaflet distribution and online campaign.

F. RESEARCH, ADVOCACY & CAMPAIGN PROGRAM

Research on Safe Chicken Value Chain

In 2023, Mati was translation partner of the research project entitled “Enhancing Resilience in Chicken Value Chain in Bangladesh: Reducing Moral Hazard and Improving Food Safety Strategies”. The project was funded by USAID and implemented in collaboration with Texas State University, USA and Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh.

Advocacy & Campaign for 100% Renewables

In, 2023, MATI organized a series of campaign event demanding for investment in renewable energy by phasing out the fossil fuel-based power plants in Bangladesh as a member of “Bangladesh working group on ecology and development - bwged” and “Coastal Livelihood and Environment Action Network - CLEAN”.

AN OVERVIEW OF MATI

HISTORY OF INCEPTION

MATI is a Non-Government Organization (NGO), established in 1997 and registered under the Department of Social Services in 1998 and under the NGO Affairs Bureau in 2000.

MATI was founded through the personal conviction of its founder Lenen Rahaman that the extreme poverty in rural Bangladesh is a severe form of injustice (as it is anywhere else in the world), which cannot be tolerated in any society that claims to be civilized. With a small group of friends, to whom he shared his basic humanist ideas, he came forward to start the first MATI-project in the small village Huzurikanda under Sherpur District. From the beginning, poverty reduction through people's empowerment, especially of women, and self-defined, participatory development methods were at the core of MATI's activities. Since those early days, MATI's activities have continuously expanded, and its mission, vision and goals have been fine-tuned over the years.

OUR BELIEFS

We strongly believe in a universal right to a life in dignity for all human beings. Through all our actions we do our best to reflect the principles of equality, fairness, democracy, good governance and human rights. Conflicts have to be solved solely through peaceful means. We see an intact ecosystem as a prerequisite for a successful, sustainable development and the well-being of all people.

Ever since the beginning of MATI's work, we have put all our good faith and effort – together with our partners on local, national and international level – towards the realization of our ultimate goal: to realize our dream of One World where also secure livelihoods for the poorest of the poor are guaranteed, a dream based on the universal principles of love and compassion for every human being.

We regard our work as a most needed statement of solidarity and fairness, and of maximum companionship in contrast to maximum profit. We perceive ourselves as just one tiny part in the bigger picture of all those who are working towards a better tomorrow for all sentient beings – in this world of plenty.

OUR VISION

MATI envisions that the people living in Bangladesh are free from poverty, hunger & discriminations and enjoy all human rights

OUR MISSION

To develop & implement sustainable, locally grounded & participatory program to serve the needs of most disadvantaged & marginalized people of Bangladesh in the fields of sustainable agriculture, basic health, education in addition to skill & vocational training, resilience to disasters & climate change and economic advancement including shaping up the value chain. Gender equality, intersectionality and DO NO HARM principles have to be respected in all program design and implementation.

OUR GOAL

Empower underprivileged and marginalized people for a better life through innovative & environment friendly agricultural interventions and the capacity building for a self-defined development.

OUR SUSTAINABLE APPROACH

Since late 1999, MATI has pursued participatory and people-centered forms of development, specifically focused on women and children. We have keenly observed that there is one big reason why development projects sometimes fail: there is no backup-support in times of crisis. However, this we consider imminent in a country that is so prone to natural calamities. So, in order not to lose our achievements mid-way, we try to offer immediate help, when possible, to support people in overcoming the crisis and in continuing on the path to development.

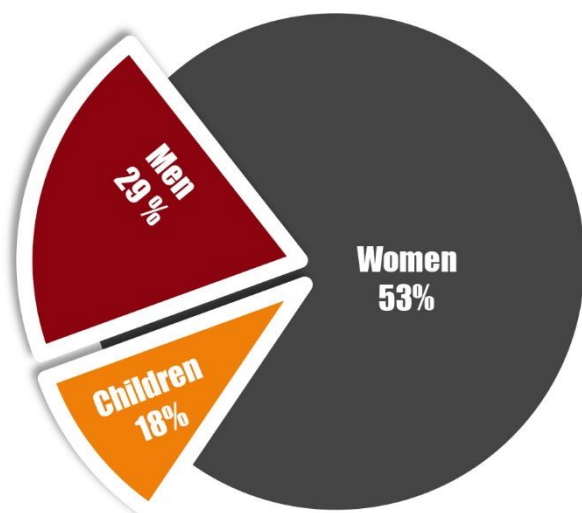
We believe that societies already hold the tools for their own development in their hands. So together with those concerned, the poor, we try to find ways to activate these tools. Poor people have a lot of ideas and initiative on how to make a change towards the better. What they lack is capital or the access to capital, which would help them make a start. Additionally, the poor are often locked into exploitative social structures. So, it is MATI's task to access funds, which can be used towards the improvement of livelihoods, in such a way that whole community's benefit.

Our ultimate goal is for our people to achieve independence, so that they do not need our programs anymore, because they can manage on their own. We see our role as mediators to help them climb up on the first steps of the development ladder and from there to continue on their own. We believe that our task is to break up dependencies not to create them. Yet, there are people who are beyond the capacity to help themselves, we do not close our doors on them either.

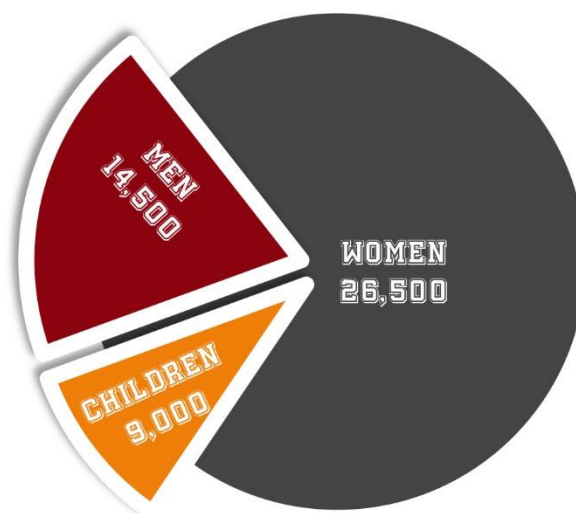
OUR BENEFICIARIES

MATI primarily serves extremely poor and marginalized communities in rural and urban areas, including farmers, sharecroppers, women, Dalits, children with disabilities, and other disadvantaged groups. Through various initiatives, MATI directly impacts approximately 50,000 individuals and indirectly benefits over 250,000. Among the direct beneficiaries, women comprise 53% (26,500), men 29% (14,500), and children 18% (9,000).

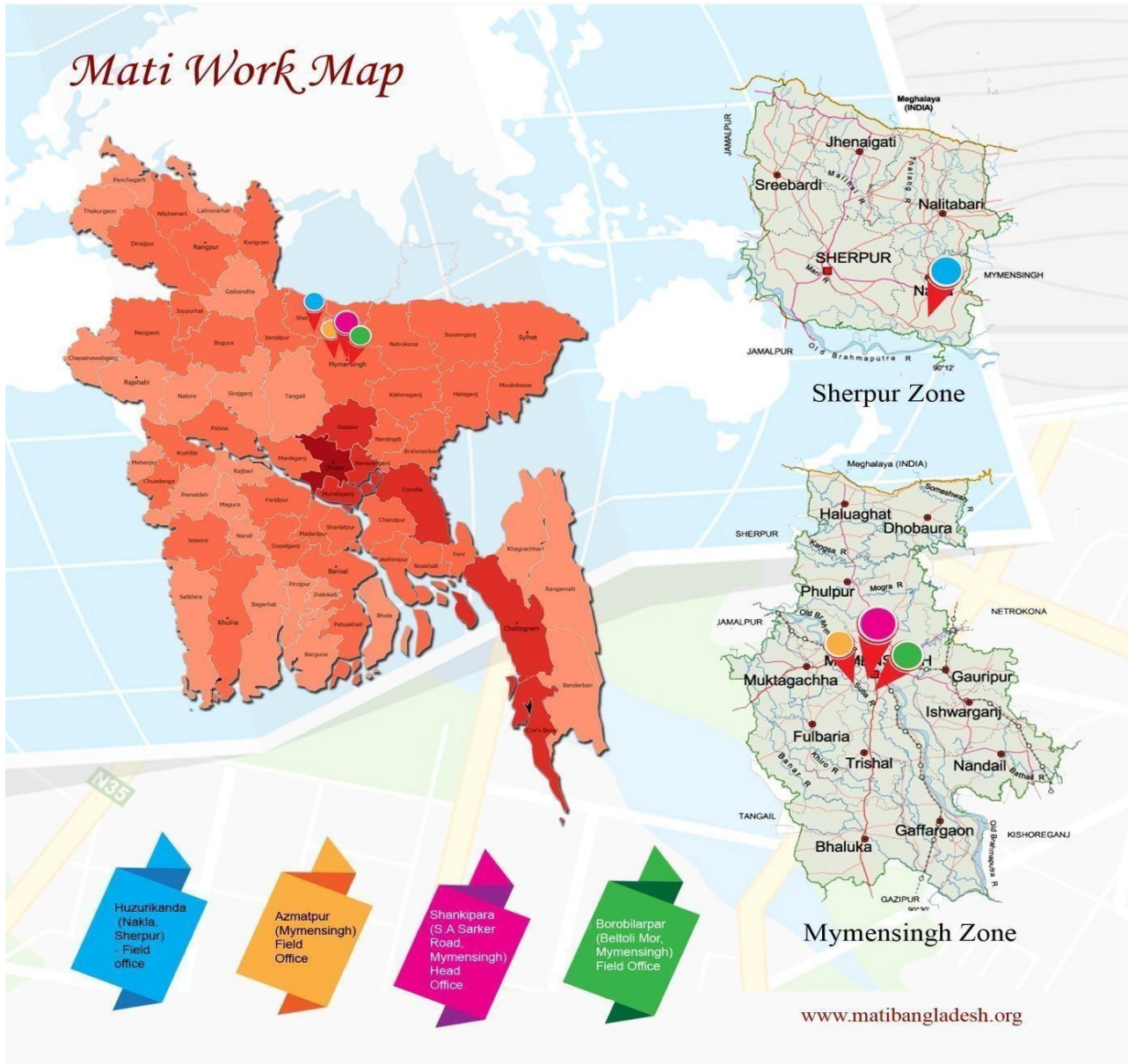
Direct beneficiaries of MATI (%)



Direct beneficiaries of MATI (number)



OUR WORKING AREA



Division	District	Upazila	Union	Village/ward
Mymensingh	Mymensingh	1	4	40
	Mymensingh (Urban Slums)	-	-	10
	Sherpur	1	3	30
	Jamalpur	1	1	20
Dhaka	Tangail	1	1	10
Total	4	4	8	110

OUR PROGRAMS

MAJOR PROGRAMS OF MATI

The major programs of MATI are -

1. Economic Development and Social Security
2. Agriculture and Food Security
3. Health and WASH
4. Quality Education and Human Resource Development
5. Environment Protection and Climate Action
6. Research, Advocacy and Campaign

Moreover, MATI possesses a significant capacity for emergency response to natural disasters, including floods, cold waves, river erosion, and cyclones, and actively implements effective response measures.

THE SDG GOALS TO ACHIEVE BY OUR PROGRAMS

MATI directly or indirectly contributes to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through its diverse programs. Economic Development and Social Security initiatives directly address SDG-1 (No Poverty) and SDG-11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). Agriculture and Food Security programs target SDG-2 (Zero Hunger). Health & WASH programs focus on SDG-3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG-6 (Clean Water and Sanitation). Quality Education & Human Resource Development initiatives aim to achieve SDG-4 (Quality Education) and SDG-8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Finally, Environment Protection & Climate Action programs contribute to SDG-7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG-12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and SDG-13 (Climate Action). Notably, SDG-5 (Gender Equality) and SDG-10 (Reduced Inequalities) are mainstreamed across all programs, prioritizing women and marginalized communities to address gender and social disparities. In 2020, MATI established the Mati Farmer Cooperative (COOP), emphasizing sustainable development, women's empowerment, and improved livelihoods for the poor. Women and girls comprise over 70% of program participants, experiencing significant improvements in income, food security, access to health services, quality education, and overall empowerment.



1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY PROGRAM

1.1 Peoples' Cooperative Development

Cooperative development is one of the core strategies of MATI for holistic development of the impoverished and extremely impoverished communities. After extensive discussions with farmers, has initiated a program to establish farmers' cooperatives for the sustainable development of smallholder farmers. In April 2019, MATI launched this program, conducting market research to inform its approach.



Organization-wise, they have so far organized 2,283 women into cooperative groups from 26 villages and 5 wards in the Mymensingh City Corporation, namely, in Mymensingh Sadar and Nakla Upazilas of Mymensingh and Sherpur districts. In 2023 alone, these cooperative members jointly saved BDT 6,502,690, which was then distributed among the members in the form of loans. In 2023, MATI facilitated the disbursement of BDT 15,140,792 toward a wide array of livelihood improvement investments, including agriculture, crop preservation, agro-based entrepreneurship, small businesses, and other income-generating activities. It is an impactful initiative that has ensured increased incomes, improved health and sanitation, better education, and overall improvement in general well-being. Crucially, it also contributed significantly to the empowerment of women within such communities.

1.2 Value Chain Development of Farmers' Products

The MATI Cooperative, though in the infant stage of development, follows a participatory approach to governance in the Sherpur and Jamalpur sub-districts of the Mymensingh district, representing 2283 women of 26 villages. The co-operative has also planned to set-up a cooperative input shop where all agricultural inputs shall be made available to meet the members' needs. The cooperative will try to obtain dealership for various inputs to sell quality products at fair prices to its members, possibly with credit options once the shop is fully operational. The MATI Cooperative also plans to build a storehouse in Chandrakona Bazar, Nakla Upazila, Sherpur district. This facility will be used by the members to store non-perishable crops at the time of harvest when the prices are low and sell in the off-season when the prices are higher for better returns on their investments.



1.3 Model SDG Village Development



Building upon the success of the Millennium Village (MV) project from 2010-2015, MATI, with support from **Stiftung Brucke - Germany**, was developed a model SDG Village. This initiative aims to achieve at least seven SDGs, recognizing that increased family income is crucial for sustainable development, enabling households to invest more in food, healthcare, education, and other essential areas. In 2023,

empowerment of communities in five villages was through the SDG Village Development. A total number of 290 members participated; Credits accessibility to 141 families in loans as facilitated by this initiative for income-generating activities like livestock rearing, setting up small businesses, and leasing land.

Besides economic empowerment, the activities also focused on improvement in the living standard. Installation of 25 water pumps and toilets with contributions from beneficiaries themselves helped in better access to clean water and sanitation. The health and well-being of villagers were also ensured by the health care team from MATI through bi-weekly medical support. Empowerment was further enhanced among women, with agricultural training in kitchen gardening and generation of income.



Besides this, the initiatives also addressed other burning issues: early marriage, dowry, eve-teasing, and drug addiction. To prevent early marriage, educational support was given to girls, and at the same time, awareness programs were conducted in schools for eradication of these social evils.



In sum, the holistic approach to community development that the SDG Village Development Initiatives embraced in 2023 included economic empowerment, improvement in living conditions, healthcare support, and social awareness.

1.4 Poronto Bela

[for the social security of elderly people]

Recognizing that older people have a right to live with respect and dignity, MATI has a program to help vulnerable elders in Bangladesh. Many older persons in the country are dependent on their children, a situation which can be hard on both generations. Historically, impoverished families could seldom fulfill even the basic needs and rights of their aging members, and eldest people suffer from various health problems that their poor families can hardly afford to treat. To reduce these sufferings, MATI started paying a small monthly allowance to 8 needy people from June 2010 with support from its inadequate resources. This number has since increased to 10 individuals receiving the same monthly support. Despite financial constraints, MATI continued this program in 2023 and hopes to expand its reach to elder people in the future, contingent on securing additional funding. Beyond this special allowance, the health program from MATI extends specific healthcare to the elderly and coordinates with the local government for these people to receive the government's Elderly Allowance.



2. AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY PROGRAM

2.1 PROMOTION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

2.1.1 Encourage youth in Organic Agriculture



In 2023, MATI helped a lot of young farmers learn better ways to grow food. They taught 81 young farmers (46 men and 35 women) about organic farming, which is a way to grow food that's good for people and the environment. These farmers learned that organic farming can help make sure everyone has enough food and can also help with climate change. MATI gave them lots of support, including teaching them how to do it and giving them the things they needed. The farmers also set up small fields to show others how organic farming works. In these fields, they showed how to get rid of bugs without chemicals and how to make good fertilizer from animal waste. The idea was that these young farmers would not only learn how to grow organic food themselves, but would also teach other farmers in their villages how to do it too.

2.1.2 Demonstrations on home-based storage System

2023, when 50 female farmers were equipped with the information and tools they needed to raise their standard of living. These women were able to take advantage of off-season pricing hikes because they were inspired and taught in efficient harvest storage methods. During this session, participants learned how to conserve their harvests and steer clear of selling right after harvest, when prices are usually low. The women got essential assistance, such as drying and storing materials, to support this endeavor. They were able to preserve the quality and worth of their produce until market prices improved by using these resources to store important commodities like rice, mustard, and chili, etc.

2.1.3 Develop community based organic seed bank

In three villages in Mymensingh and Sherpur, community seed banks are being established to give farmers greater control over their seeds and improved access to high-quality seeds. Organic practices will be the main focus of these seed banks. This project aims to offer farmers more control over their seed supply and recognizes the need of preserving local seeds. Storage containers will be provided to the seed banks so that the seeds remain viable and fresh for an extended period of time. Locating and preserving regional seed varieties that face extinction is a crucial aspect of this effort. This will help protect the variety of local plants. This information is recorded in the seed bank's books, showing what seeds are being stored and given out to farmers.



2.1.4 Establish Co-op based processing Centre

In 2023, another step was made to support safe food value chain development within MATI Eco-village in Huzurikanda, Nakla Upazila, Sherpur district, by establishing a cooperative-based processing center that empowered local farmers to bring their produce to the market. The newly inaugurated processing center is designed with a host of machinery prepared for processing different key agricultural produces. The mustard crushing machine for oil extraction, spice grinding machines for chili, turmeric, and coriander, and black gram crushing machines are a big team at the processing center. The bottling and packaging machines, along with other facilities at the



center, mean that the co-operative is suitably able to package their processed goods for sale in a professional and marketable manner. The center also has a big storage facility, which can store up to 500 mounds of crops, to ensure that raw materials and processed products are preserved. In fact, this complete setup will enable the cooperative to handle the entire value chain-from production to processing and packaging-that ultimately supports their objective of safe food for the community.

2.2 Safe Food Value Chain Development

In 2023, the farmers' cooperative in MATI Eco-village began its giant step toward economic independence with the greater involvement of processing, packaging, and direct marketing of its agricultural produce to consumers. This was something big from mere raw crop production to value addition, with control over distribution channels. Initial product range includes mustard oil, chili powder, turmeric powder, coriander powder, and black gram. Besides these core products, the cooperative is also in process for the production of herbal tea, with a total of three varieties processed, namely Rosella, Lemon grass, and Tulsi, which is commonly known as holy basil. It will promote such products through online and offline promotional activities to reach the last customer. The online promotion may include social media marketing, online marketplaces, and, not essentially, having its website. Besides these digital platforms, the cooperative also participates in district-level agricultural fairs. Events like this will provide good opportunities for direct communications with target customers and demonstrations of products to people in the community.



2.3 Establish Food Forest for Biodiversity Conservation

In 2023, a huge ecological undertaking began to take place in MATI Eco-village with the establishment of the food forest. The whole area is about four acres of land and consists of more than 1000 saplings of more than 300 species of the food forest. The whole area is about four acres in size and consists of more than 1,000 fruit trees, medicinal plants, timber trees, and ornamental trees.



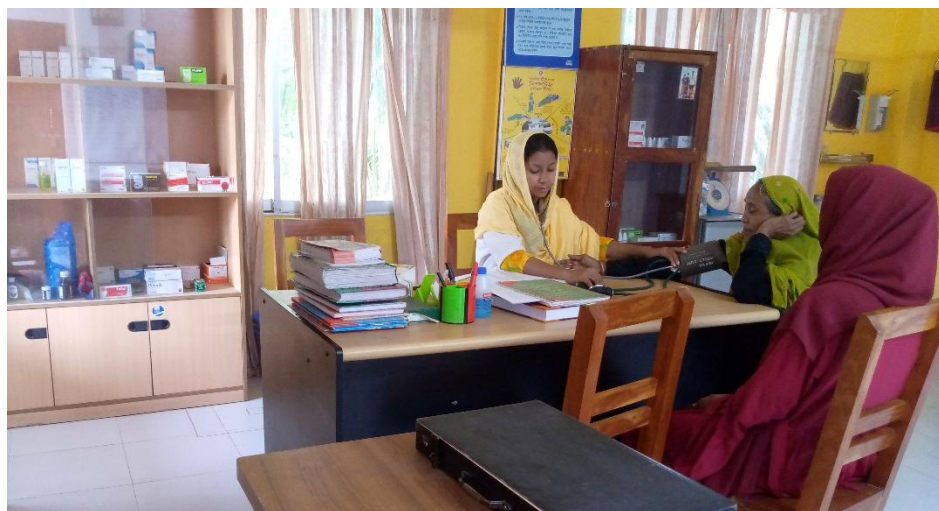
It is a collection of plants put together with care to serve as sustenance for many local faunas, which have been threatened with extinction. Food foresting will build an ecosystem that is self-sustaining, supportive of biodiversity, and food security in the community.

3. HEALTH AND WASH PROGRAM

3.1 MPHCC, Head Office Mymensingh And Huzurikanda, Sherpur

MATI initiated health services in 2005 for a Scheduled Caste Hindu minority (Dalit) population living near the MATI Head office in Sankipara with the aim of promoting the wellness and good health of the urban and rural poor. In 2009, the MATI Primary Health Care Center (MPHCC) was

built in the premises of the MATI headquarters, increasing the services for the poor and very poor people in the district of Mymensingh, where MATI operates its activities. Over time, the service catchment area



gradually increased to include the villages in Bangladesh's Mymensingh, Sherpur, and Jamalpur districts, and the urban slums under the Mymensingh City Corporation.

In Mymensingh city, there are two health centers where the general public can easily get primary treatments from these health centers. Besides this, health workers go to the field level in the working area of Mati for providing primary health services.

Activities & Achievements in 2023

Activities	Achievements
Health Awareness Meeting and Training	185 Trainings (Hk-50.My-135) (approx. 7536 patients)
Free Treatment & Medicine Support	2834 Patients (Medicine Cost BDT 1,99,281) (Hk-673 My-2161)
Field Level Health Camp	1595 Women, (HK-1320 & My-275)
Family Planning Services	369 Women (Hk-50, My-319)
Women Services Pregnancy and Post Delivery	93 Women (Hk-31, My- 62)
Physiotherapy Services	180 Patients
Children Milk Support	2 Children (Cost BDT2,000)
Referral Services	221 Patients
Discounts for Treatment	46 Patients (BDT 24,972)

3.2 Mati Eye Care Centre, Huzurikanda

MATI, along with a German organization called "Foundation Bridge Balingen-Bangladesh (FBBB)" and the BNSB Eye Hospital in Mymensingh, provides eye care services to underprivileged residents in their area. They offer free checkups, treatment, and eyeglasses, and even work to prevent eye diseases from getting worse. In some cases, they can even provide LASIK surgery. To improve their services, FBBB is helping MATI build a special medical center focused on eye care at the Huzurikanda site. Additionally, MATI collaborates with other eye hospitals in Bangladesh, including Dr. K. Zaman BNSB Eye Hospital to provide more options for people in need.



Activities & Achievements in 2023

Activities	Achievements
Eye Center Patients	2864
Prescription for Spectacles	629
Spectacles Prepared/ Spectacles Support	422
Eye Screening Camp	49
Identification of Cataract	415
Distribution of Medicines	1985 participants & cost-1,27,752
Cataracts Operation	198
Patients Screened in the Field	13225
Awareness Sessions	125 (approx. 3920 participants)

3.3 Physiotherapy

In 2010, Ms. Steffi Rettenmeier, a German volunteer, started a physiotherapy project at MATI NGO in Mymensingh. Since then, MATI has continued to provide Physiotherapy services with especial emphasis on people with disabilities (PWDs). German physiotherapists would frequently come to MATI to provide specialized care for people with disabilities, paralysis, and injuries.

MATI has continued to provide physiotherapy. In 2023, 195 children with disabilities from the schools of MATI received regular physiotherapy provided by qualified staff members from MATI.



3.4 WASH Activities

As was previously noted, MATI has been offering credit support to the families as part of the savings and credit program. Moreover, because a large section of the families in the working area still lack access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities, the development partners of MATI sometimes also provide support for the installation of a sanitary latrine and drinking water pumps or tube wells. In the year 2023, 50 families received support from Stiftung Brücke to install tube wells and sanitary latrines at their homes.



3.5 Establishment of a Pharmacy & Outpatient Clinic At KZH

The MATI Dispensary was established on the KZH campus in 2021 and was funded by SEZ through FVBBB. The dispensary, built by Babu Mia himself, an entrepreneur, is designed to be self-sufficient. Equipped with all medical needs and furniture, the dispensary employs a paramedic, a pharmacist, and a visiting doctor who attends from 3 to 9 pm, serving an average of 48 patients per day. The dispensary sells medicines at low prices and offers free medication to the ultra-poor through MATI Cooperative's Health Security Program. The serious cases are referred to the Mymensingh Medical College or to a local government hospital. The patients pay according to their ability to pay, while the costs are covered by MATI from donations and surplus income. Basic medical provisions and free medicines are also supplied to KZH, and regular health camps are held in remote villages.

4. QUALITY EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

4.1 Projapoti Daycare Centers

[for the children of poor working mothers living in the urban areas]

From 2015 to 2020, Mati and Caritas jointly ran eight successful day-care centers in Mymensingh City, supporting children's development and education while their mothers worked. Although funding limitations forced the closure of some centers after 2020, Mati, with German support, maintained four day-care centers (two rural, two urban), serving the children. In 2023, MATI continued to remain committed to early childhood development through maintaining operations in five rural daycare centers, one of which was meant for children with disabilities. The services are currently being availed of by a total of 178 children from disadvantaged families. The DCCs apply the internationally accepted child-centered Swiss teaching method called "Essence of Learning." This innovative approach is applied by teachers who have received specialized training by Ms. Beatrice Rutishauser of Switzerland, the method's creator, to ensure that the children receive quality, developmentally appropriate care and education.



4.2 Construction of a Daycare Building

In 2023, MATI embarked on an exciting new project, the construction of a five-story building in Gohailkandi, Mymensingh. This building, constructed using eco-friendly blocks, will house a new daycare and preschool, made possible through funding from the Patrizia Foundation in Germany. The preschool and daycare will implement a unique educational approach known as EoL, or "Essence of Learning," a Swedish pedagogical method. This method likely emphasizes play-based learning, exploration, and child-centered activities designed to foster holistic development in young children. The new facility will provide a safe and stimulating environment for children in the community, offering them quality care and early childhood education based on the innovative EoL philosophy. The use of eco-blocks in the construction underscores MATI's commitment to sustainability and environmentally responsible building practices.



4.3 Mati Eco-Primary School, Huzurikanda

MATI opened its first free school, known as MATI Eco-School, in MATI Eco-Village in Huzurikanda in order to make quality education affordable for low -income families. Presently in 2023, 145 pupils are receiving a top-notch education at the MATI Eco-Primary School, 68 of them are boys and 77 are girls. In 2023, 40 new students are enrolled in the school, among them 15 are boys and 25 are girls.

The school offers totally free of cost education up to class 5 plus one year of the preschool class. There are 10 female teachers in the school.

The students of MATI Eco-School avail very good results every year with a good reputation. Apart from the regular classes, students are also involved with extracurricular activities like sports, cultural activities, gardening, nursery & plantation and environmental education etc. The teachers are trained to teach by following the Swiss education method “Essence of learning (EoL)” in all classes.



From 1999 to 2023, a total of 813 students passed from the school. Last year, 14 students had a brilliant result when they passed the primary school examination.

From the school, the students acquire knowledge of formal education, as well as social ethics, global warming, organic agriculture, and other important topics. The students are now able to recognize the difference between right and wrong, identify their strengths and areas for growth, and raise their voices against injustice. In addition to education, the students are now able to cooperate, share, and care for others, especially in times of emergency. They are also able to work in teams and show empathy for others. Furthermore, they can help increase the income of their family by installing a kitchen garden in their small yard. This will not only benefit them financially, but also give them a better understanding of the environment and the importance of sustainability.

4.4 Student Support Program (SSP)

In Bangladesh, child marriage is a problem that can only be resolved via education. It is one of the main reasons why so many girls drop out of secondary and higher school. Due to their financial situation, poor parents used to arrange their daughters' marriages when they were still quite young. Since 2005, MATI has operated the SSP to assist parents who, in spite of their extreme poverty, opt to have children rather than get married.

The process of developing a new concept for the SSP program began in early 2022. Over the past year, several meetings were held to explore the potential of this new approach. A final survey was conducted from March 25 to April 30, 2023, to finalize the list of participants for the program. A team of 10 volunteers visited the homes of each student and their families to gather information about their family's situation, income, needs, and challenges. The survey questionnaire covered various aspects of the new SSP concept, including the type and amount of support, how often it would be provided, and how it would be used. The survey also asked families about their preferred income-generating activities (IGAs). In addition to the survey, three parent meetings were held in small groups of 10 to 15 participants in Mymensingh and Huzurikanda. These meetings aimed to explain the new SSP program, the purpose and benefits of IGA support, and to gather feedback and suggestions from the parents.

SDG Village (Stiftung Brücke): 94% of students are under the new concept (50 students are under the new concept, remaining 3 students), and 94% of students have their savings book. 73% of parents are in the IGA. The remaining IGA is under process by the end of August all of the parents will be under the IGA program.

Stiftung 100: 91% of students are under the new concept (46 students are under the new concept, remaining 5 students), 91% of students have their savings book. 21% of parents are in the IGA. The remaining IGA is under process by the end of August all of the parents will be under the IGA program.



Mati e.V: 76% of students are under the new concept (57 students are under the new concept, remaining 18 students), 76% students have their savings book. 27% of parents are in the IGA. The remaining IGA is under process by the end of August all of the parents will be under the IGA program.

Brücke Balingen Bangladesh: 100% of students are under the new concept, all students have their savings book. 33% of parents are in the IGA. The remaining IGA is under process by the end of August all of the parents will be under the IGA program.

16 Mati cooperative groups leader meetings have been done so far to include the new SSP students. The students get extra support for instance school registration fees, buying expensive stationery products, receive health support, etc. They are also provided with different hands-on awareness education and training on health-related issues and they are engaged in social development and environmental protection activities.

4.5 Student Scholarship for Paramedic Course

In Bangladesh, there aren't enough trained medical personnel to deliver high-quality care, particularly in rural areas. The fact that the rural poor rely so heavily on untrained medication vendors for their primary healthcare services causes everyone a great deal of anxiety.

In such a situation, MATI Bangladesh began a project in January 2016 called "Job Creation for Young Adolescent Girls and Boys, Enrolment in Vocational Training Institutes, and Practical Training at MATI Health Care Project in the North of Bangladesh" with friends and partner organizations, especially with "Foundation Bridge Brücke Balingen (FBBB)" of Germany.

To date, Taleb Ali MATS (Medical Assistant Training Institute) in Mymensingh has provided funding for 10 paramedic students to complete their coursework. While the remaining 4 pupils are still enrolled in classes, 6 students have already finished their coursework.

To date, Taleb Ali MATS (Medical Assistant Training Institute) in Mymensingh has provided funding for 4 paramedic students to complete their coursework. 4 students have already finished their coursework.

Also, between 2023, Mymensingh's Rumdo Nursing College (Medical Assistant Training Institute) has funded 10 paramedic students to complete their coursework. They are working practically at the Mati Health Center for on-the-experience learning, in addition to taking courses at Rumdo.



4.6 School Lunch Program

Many of the children who attend the MATI Eco-school come from very poor families and often go hungry. They have to go to school all morning and afternoon without eating, which makes it hard for them to concentrate on their studies and can harm their health.

With the support of **Stiftung Brücke** In 2012, MATI started a School Lunch Program to help these children. Every day, all the students in the school are given a healthy lunch to improve their nutrition. In 2023, 145 children received healthy meals. The children say that they really enjoy the lunches because they help them pay attention better in class and come to school more regularly.



4.7 Vocational Training for Human Resource Development



MATI has recognized the high prevalence of unemployment among young adults, particularly those from rural areas, as a major socio-economic challenge. MATI has also identified the lack of adequate, affordable and effective vocational training facilities for the general public as the main barrier for young people from disadvantaged families to acquire a technical

qualification that would equip them with the necessary skills and certificates for better job prospects. Therefore, since 2000, MATI has been offering various training courses to create employment opportunities for young adults, especially females. MATI has already made significant progress in establishing a training institute called MATI Vocational and Technical Training Centre (MVTTC) that offers eight training courses at present. MVTTC has already obtained conditional approval from the Technical Education Board to conduct training on two trades: 1. Computer Office Application and 2. Electrical House Wiring. To obtain approval for other courses, the required infrastructure and facilities have to be completed as soon as possible.



Currently there are a total of 12 training centers on the Mati in 2023. There are a total of six training courses under the BMZ-2 program, two training courses under the Technical Education Board and one training course under Stiuftung 100 program. Mati has three permanent training courses. The list of training centers is mentioned below.

By 2023, MVTTC has offered eight training courses for 820 trainees (214 boys and 606 girls) in 73 batches as presented in the table below.

Table: Ongoing training courses offered by MVTTC in 2023

Sl.	Course Title	Total no. of trainees			Total of batches
		Girls	Boys	Total	
01	Computer Training	52	42	94	10
02	Sewing Cutting Training (Four Centre)	190		190	36
03	Carpentry Training		10	10	2
04	Agricultural Organic Training	328	92	420	14
05	Beauty Parlor Training	36		36	4
06	Mobile Servicing Training		40	40	4
07	Paramedic Training		10	10	1
08	Welding Training		20	20	2
	Total=	606	214	820	73

5. ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE & DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

5.1 Awareness Campaign on Climate Change

MATI includes information about climate change, healthy soil, and protecting the environment in all its projects and activities. A key part of MATI's work is teaching people about these important topics, and they did many things in 2023 to help spread awareness.

They reached different groups of people in various ways. For example, they held meetings with local farmers' groups, taught students in special programs, and included information in their training courses about farming in ways that help the environment. They also gave out leaflets, celebrated important environmental days, and



organized bicycle rallies to get the word out. MATI believes it's important to teach young people about these issues, so they held meetings in schools and colleges to help students understand the challenges and learn how to make a difference.

5.2 Clean City Campaign

MATI cares about the environment and helps keep things clean. Like they do every year, they held a "clean city" campaign to teach people why it's important to manage trash properly and keep their surroundings clean. This year, the campaign focused on helping young people become leaders in their neighborhoods. Thirty kids and teens, ages 5 to 25, took part. These young people don't just participate in the campaign once; they regularly encourage their neighbors to do small things that help keep the area clean. The campaign probably gave these young environmental champions new ideas and information to help them do even more to spread the word in their community.

5.3 Climate Change Network Development

MATI plays a leading role in regional climate action by initiating and hosting the secretariat for the "Climate Change Network in Greater Mymensingh" (CCNGM). This network brings together 65 grassroots-level NGOs operating within the Mymensingh division, creating a collaborative platform for addressing climate change challenges. Mr. Lenen Rahman, the Executive Director of MATI, serves as the Chairperson of this influential network. CCNGM's primary focus is on advocacy and public awareness campaigns related to climate change. In 2023, the network was particularly active in advocating for a green and equitable energy transition in Bangladesh. This involved close collaboration with other national and international networks working on similar issues, amplifying their collective voice and impact.

5.4 Afforestation

MATI, in collaboration with its member organizations in the CCNGM network, SSP, and MATI Eco-school students, organized a significant tree planting initiative in 2023. Hundreds of thousands of saplings were planted, contributing to reforestation efforts and promoting a greener environment.

To further encourage widespread participation in tree planting, MATI organized awareness events, distributed leaflets, and launched an online campaign. These efforts aimed to educate the public about the importance of trees in mitigating climate change and improving the environment, while also providing practical guidance on tree planting and care.



6. RESEARCH, ADVOCACY & CAMPAIGN PROGRAM

6.1 Research on Safe Chicken Value Chain

In 2023, MATI played a key role as a translation partner in a significant research project focused on improving the chicken value chain in Bangladesh. The project, titled “Enhancing Resilience in Chicken Value Chain in Bangladesh: Reducing Moral Hazard and Improving Food Safety Strategies,” was funded by USAID. MATI's contribution involved translating materials and information related to the project, ensuring effective communication and understanding among all stakeholders, including local communities, researchers, and project implementers. This



collaborative effort brought together expertise from Texas State University in the United States and Bangladesh Agricultural University in Mymensingh. The project likely addressed critical issues such as promoting responsible practices within the chicken industry (reducing moral hazard) and strengthening food safety measures, ultimately aiming to enhance the resilience and sustainability of this vital agricultural sector in Bangladesh. MATI's translation work was essential in bridging any language gaps and facilitating the project's success

6.2 Advocacy & Campaign for 100% Renewables

In 2023, MATI actively participated in advocating for a shift towards renewable energy and away from fossil fuels in Bangladesh. As a member of two prominent networks, the "Bangladesh Working Group on Ecology and Development" (BWGED) and the "Coastal Livelihood and Environment Action Network" (CLEAN), MATI organized a series of campaign events. These campaigns aimed



to raise awareness about the urgent need to invest in renewable energy sources and to phase out existing fossil fuel-based power plants. MATI's involvement with BWGED and CLEAN demonstrates their commitment to collaborative action on climate change and sustainable development. The campaign events likely included a range of activities, such as public demonstrations, educational workshops, community outreach programs, and advocacy

efforts targeting policymakers and the general public. By participating in these campaigns, MATI contributed to the growing movement for a cleaner and more sustainable energy future for Bangladesh.

