

SUSTAINABILITY AND PARTNERSHIP TO REDUCE INEQUALITIES

Empowering societies by connecting them to what matters most has always been at the heart of what we do. Since its inception in 1997, Grameenphone has always been upholding high ethical standards in its business while delivering on its social obligations. We are committed to UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with specific focus on Goal#10 – Reducing Inequalities. We want to enable societies to unlock, and experience the benefits of the digital revolution and achieve their fullest potential with connectivity. The sustainability agenda for Grameenphone is clearly defined by global directions, design digital solutions to empower society at large, mitigate business risks and anchor our agenda within the framework of SDG#10. Within that framework Grameenphone’s commitment to the society is to partner with responsible and impactful social partners to reduce inequality and empower society within the field of expertise. Grameenphone is equally committed to maintaining responsible business practices throughout its entire supply chain, ensuring that its partners maintain the same standards.

“ We are committed to UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with specific focus on Goal#10 – Reducing Inequalities. We want to enable societies to unlock, and experience the benefits of the digital revolution and achieve their fullest potential with connectivity.

Partnering to Promote Safer Digital Participation and Create Access to Quality Education

In line with Grameenphone’s Sustainability strategy, we aim to create opportunities for meaningful and safe digital participation for everyone. At the core of that ambition lies the access to quality education, regardless of gender, location and socio-economic background. The Child Online Safety initiative is all about creating safe learning opportunities while simultaneously addressing both economic and gender inequality. As the largest ISP in Bangladesh, we are working on creating a safer online space to support the development of society and reduce inequalities. This enables students from all communities to compete on a level playing field with their counterparts in the urban areas as well as across the world.

In 2018, our partnership with UNICEF, the globally recognised child rights organisation and Telenor Group, emerged as the biggest collaboration in Bangladesh in the private development sector. The unique partnership allowed us to reach more than 400,000 students and sensitise 70,000 parents, guardians and teachers about online safety. Additionally, the Child Helpline 1098 has been expanded to work in parallel with the program to provide support on Child Online Safety issues. To further strengthen our commitment to this cause, our social advocacy campaign created mass awareness on social media around safety and precaution measures for children while using the internet. This campaign reached more than 10 million people on social media.

2018 culminated with a panel discussion on Child Online Safety with leading educationalists and public sector specialists to initiate more dialogue around this critically important issue and to explore national level safety measures. Grameenphone actively seeks opportunities where technology can contribute to achieve the targets set for the country.



Supply Chain Sustainability

Grameenphone is vigilant about ensuring responsible business conduct across the entire Supply Chain. Grameenphone’s Supplier Conduct Principles (SCP) are based on internationally recognised standards around human rights, health and safety, labour rights, environment and anti-corruption. It is mandatory for all Grameenphone contracting parties to agree to these principles. All suppliers and parties with a direct contractual relationship with Grameenphone must comply with our Supplier

Conduct Principles (SCP). An Agreement on Responsible Business Conduct (ABC) legally obliges the supplier to comply with the SCP and certain requirements set out in the ABC agreement. All suppliers are required to extend the principles and cascade them down in their own supply chain. Currently, 100% suppliers and partners have endorsed the agreement on responsible business conduct.

Grameenphone conducts annual supply chain capacity building through on-site briefings, awareness sessions, workshops, forums, process support, online portals and resource guides to ensure our suppliers and sub-suppliers follow the same continuous improvement process. Capacity building is customised and caters to realistic practical situations and the actual need of the suppliers, with a particular focus on awareness of Grameenphone Supplier Conduct Principles issues as well as specific activities related to skill development (e.g. tower climbing). Topics generally include labour rights, health and safety, anti-corruption, green initiatives, women empowerment and diversity. In 2018, Grameenphone conducted a total of 6,139 man-hours of supply chain capacity building to promote responsible business practices at work.

To monitor compliance with the requirements on responsible business conduct, Grameenphone carries out regular inspections and audits across its supply chain. In 2018, Grameenphone conducted 905 supply chain inspections of which 90% were unannounced.

Going forward, inspections, audits, capacity building and long-term risk reduction will remain a priority in Grameenphone's responsible supply chain agenda. Furthermore, Grameenphone will strive towards long-term risk reduction through continually reinforcing the importance of supply chain improvement.

Supporting the Book Reading Program

Grameenphone is committed to supporting SDG#10 by leveraging its connectivity to reduce inequalities through scalable and sustainable initiatives. "Alor Pathshala" (School of Enlightenment: www.alorpathshala.org) is the first online book reading program launched by Bishwo Shahitto Kendro (BSK) and Grameenphone, on 19 March 2014. Alor Pathshala enables students to enjoy local and international classics. By the end of 2018, the site had more than 1.5 million downloads and more than 1.3 million visitors. Grameenphone has also supported the Book Reading Program and recognised 19,647 voracious readers out of 185,678 students from 1,453 schools.

Support for Distressed People

Grameenphone extended its support to victims during the cold wave in January 2018 which impacted around 10,000 people in the northern and southern districts of the country.

Bangladesh CSR Leadership Awards 2018

Grameenphone was awarded for "Innovation in Corporate Social Responsibility Practices" at the Bangladesh CSR Leadership Awards 2018. We were recognised for our innovative approach in designing and deploying sustainability initiatives for the community. The CSR Leadership Awards recognise corporate entities and individuals that have made a significant and positive impact on the lives of people around them, through their involvement in corporate social responsibility programs that respect communities, the environment and people. All of our sustainability projects such as the Child Online Safety and Supply Chain Sustainability initiatives are based on a successful marriage between technology and innovation.

