

Grameen Gazette #12

Grameen Gazette, the Newsletter from **Grameen Australia** – the organisation empowering people to change their lives through the implementation of innovative Microfinance and Social Business Projects.

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Opening of Japan Automechanic School = Training and Income for disadvantaged youth in Dhaka



Grameen Australia Executive Director Duncan Power welcomes the new students

Grameen Australia is delighted to announce the opening of the Japan Automechanic School. The first 10 students commenced their two-year training course on 16th January 2015.

The students were selected from 100 applicants all of whom submitted to challenging practical and written tests and a formal interview. Criteria for selection included that they be from the very poorest backgrounds with family income below USD 150/month (USD 5/day).

Key Program Parameters

- Provide marketable skills to disadvantaged and marginalised youth through vocational training and hands-on experience, together with social support
- Provide ongoing support and follow-up to youth who join the employment market after graduation
- At capacity the School will provide training for 100 students per year with 200 students living at the School each year as they complete the 2 year program
- Sustainability of the School and its programs will be built through successful management and marketing of the Workshop services to the public

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Project Objectives

The School provides comprehensive training and hands-on experience in auto mechanical service, repair, panel beating and painting to disadvantaged and poverty stricken youth in Dhaka and the surrounding rural areas.

The students will complete an initial year of training before moving to the Workshop as apprentices and will receive a living wage. Training is provided by Japanese mechanics who will build local capacity towards the installation of local trainers. Students also receive English tuition as well as business and life skills to prepare them for the workforce and management of their finances.



The project is structured as a social business with the Workshop covering the costs of the School. The project is an international joint venture partnership between Grameen Australia, a Japanese Foundation, Grameen Shikha and Rangs Workshop Ltd.

Achievements to Date



- Initial Workshop and School premises secured from Rangs, a key local business partner and one of Bangladesh's largest conglomerates with expertise in the automobile sector.
- The search continues for longer-term land to grow the Workshop and School towards viability.
- Residential accommodation for the students secured.
- Employment of the Head Teacher, a qualified automobile mechanic and teacher from Japan.
- Development of the curriculum.
- Initial equipment purchased with support from Rangs.
- School commenced on 16th January 2015, with a formal Official Opening to be held in the first half of 2015 with Professor Yunus as guest of honour alongside the Ambassadors of Japan and Australia.