

# JOBS

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR BANGLADESH

# Newsletter

January 2004 Vol.-1 Issue 14

## The Director's Message

Dear Partners,

Greetings! The past months have been exciting ones for JOBS and its clients. We were fortunate to have the Deputy Administrator of USAID visit Bangladesh, particularly since his visit included a stop at one of JOBS' clients.

Our team has been working diligently to discover and develop new sectors that have the potential for export diversification for the country. In the past months we have focussed our attention on clients producing home textiles, footwear, leathersgoods, floor coverings, and personal protective equipment. We have been assisted in our work with these sectors by both local and international experts, including trainers from Germany, Sweden, and India. We are confident that these interventions will help our producers compete successfully at prestigious international trade fairs – Heim, Domotox, Birmingham – they plan to participate in early in 2004.

The end of the year also heralded a new era of collaboration for JOBS, which has become a proud partner in the multi-donor funded KATALYST project, GTZ's BDS project, and USAID's initiative for protected forest areas implemented by the International Resource Group (IRG).

We hope that the new year will witness an ever stronger SME sector, and bring exponential increases to Bangladeshi exports and further cooperation among development partners. After all, we all share the same broad objective – Creating Opportunities for Bangladesh! ■



Bangladesh Stall at Singapore Gifts and Premium Show.

## Participation in International Fairs Brings Many Benefits to Bangladeshi Businesses

Foremost among the many ways Bangladeshi businesses have benefited from their participation in international trade fairs are:

- Promoting access to new markets,
- Enhancing the country's image internationally,
- Developing networking opportunities,
- Gaining direct feedback on product performance, and
- Understanding market orientation.

Fairs are ideal places to show and advertise products and meet prospective buyers. To date, JOBS has organized groups of Bangladeshi business men and women to participate in 20 major fairs in the U.S., U.K., Germany, and the Middle East, generating U.S. \$30 million worth of exports.

JOBS helps participants before, during, and after these fairs. Pre-fair support includes the selection and preparation of products and travel logistics; during the fair, JOBS consultants help design attractive, effective product displays, facilitate interactions with buyers, and assist with advertising and press publicity; after the fair, JOBS helps with follow-up on orders and new contacts.

Among the Bangladeshi products that have benefited from the exposure they enjoyed at the Spring Fair in the U.K., the Tendance Lifestyle and Domotex fairs in Germany, and the New York Home Textile Show in the U.S. are diversified jute products, personal protective equipment, handmade paper and leather crafts, and home textiles. Participation in these fairs generated around U.S. \$1.5 million in sales, introduced 20 Bangladeshi companies to new markets, and made a major contribution to new product concepts and designs that appeal to international buyers.

As a result of their participation in these fairs, many foreign companies have agreed to work with Bangladeshi companies for backward support, in some cases forming joint ventures to initiate orders and tap new markets. JOBS has received international recognition for its help to Bangladeshi producers through initiatives such as the A+A Fair in Düsseldorf, Germany, a specialized fair for personal protective equipment products that Bangladeshi companies participated in for the first time.

JOBS will continue to facilitate participation in more fairs in the coming years, allowing Bangladeshi producers to play an even greater role in strengthening the national economy through exports and expanding employment opportunities. ■



An innovative USAID initiative implemented by the IRIS Center at University of Maryland.



## USAID Administrator Visits Home Textile Producer



Frederick W Schieck checking the product quality of Shell Crafts (JOBS assisted company).

During his recent trip to Bangladesh, JOBS hosted USAID Deputy Administrator Frederick W. Schieck on a visit to Shell Crafts, one of the country's leading home textile producers.

Mr. Schieck was introduced to Shell Crafts to show the potential of the home and kitchen textiles - one of the most promising sectors for Bangladesh. They have the advantage of being both less capital intensive to produce and eco-friendly; moreover, there is a huge demand for these products in local as well as international markets.

JOBS agreed to assist technically and with market linkage support when Shell Crafts took the initiative to develop textile products for export. Recently, JOBS facilitated a three-month product development training session for company employees, concentrating on kitchen products and decorative items for the home. Shell Crafts was also selected to participate in the New York Home Textile Show 2003. Currently, the company is working with a leading Swedish firm with a chain of markets around the world, and with leading local home textile producers. Since JOBS' intervention, Shell Crafts has increased its workforce from 28 to 60 employees.

JOBS Deputy Project Director Asif U. Ahmed's presentation on JOBS' Integrated Approach for the Home Textile Sector for Mr. Schieck was followed by a question and answer session about the sector's prospects and the impact of JOBS' assistance. Mr. Schieck was here to monitor the progress of USAID-funded projects in the country. ■

## Apex Leather Craft Receives CE Marking

Apex Leather Craft, one of Bangladesh's leading leather goods manufacturers, recently received European Conformity (CE) marking from the European Standards Association for the production of safety gloves.

The move opens the door for Apex to the U.S. \$26 billion European market for personal protective equipment (PPE). JOBS recently identified PPE, a U.S. \$40 billion industry growing at 4% per year, as an important export growth sector for Bangladesh, and has long term plans for the development of the sector.

CE certification enabled Apex to participate the world's biggest PPE fair, the A+A fair in Germany, in October 2003. This was first time a Bangladeshi PPE manufacturer participated in such a fair and fosters a new identity for personal protective equipment as an export diversified industry for Bangladesh. ■



Shakil A. Khan, Managing Director of Apex Leather Crafts Fashion & Accessories Ltd. Seen in the A+A PPE Fair in Dusseldorf, Germany.

## JOBS Project Director Attends 4th Annual BDS Seminar in Italy

JOBS Project Director Imran Shuaket attended the 4th Annual Business Development Services (BDS) Seminar held in Turin, Italy in September 2003. Both JOBS' cluster model and embedded services model were highlighted at the prestigious seminar for second year in a row. The seminar, at which issues related to BDS services for the development of micro, small, and medium enterprises around the world are discussed and lessons learned from successful projects are presented, is the biggest in the field. ■



Participants at the 4th Annual BDS Seminar in Turin, Italy.



Participants seen in the (Designing Training Curriculum and Improving Facilitation Skills) training program organized by JOBS for ten Micro Finance Institutes.

## JOBS Organizes Training for Ten Micro Finance Institutes

The JOBS Project conducted a seven-day course on Designing Training Curriculum and Improving Facilitation Skills for twelve participants of ten different Micro Finance Institutes (MFI) at its offices in November 2003. The course, which was organized and coordinated by the JOBS training team, was a capacity building effort using a business development services (BDS) approach, designed to develop a resource base for the MFI's that will allow them to assess staff needs and design, develop, facilitate, and monitor on-going staff development training. The major contents of the course included training cycles, training needs assessment, course curriculum design, session development, module development, training methods, facilitation skills, report writing, and training monitoring and evaluation. ■

## JOBS Assists ME Cluster to Get Bank Loan

With JOBS's facilitation, entrepreneurs of the Shafipur cluster recently received a loan of Tk.150, 000 from Prime Bank to buy land needed to expand their production unit.

The cluster of eight micro enterprises produced shoes for the local market until JOBS organized and linked them with Apex Footwear Limited, Bangladesh's leading shoe exporter, in 1999. Since then, thanks to the technical and marketing assistance received from JOBS, the Shafipur cluster has been supplying Apex, Legacy, Surma Footwear, and other leading exporters, and grown from microenterprises into small enterprises.

Increasing demand for their products presented the entrepreneurs with the need to take out their first loan from a commercial bank to expand their production unit. After expansion, the cluster plans to employ 80 more people and their income is expected to increase by another 25%. ■



Workers at the Shafipur shoe cluster.



Participants of the training program seen with JOBS Management.



Asif U. Ahmed, Deputy Director Program, distribute certificate among the participant.



Training session is going on at the EDBM Training.

## JOBS Provides Technical Support to Mirpur Benarashi Palli

In December, JOBS conducted a seven-day Entrepreneurship Development and Business Management (EDBM) training session for entrepreneurs of Mirpur Benarashi Palli, Dhaka. Earlier, the entrepreneurs had received a two-month long skill development training session on the design, color combination, and quality improvement of Benarashi sarees. The training was facilitated by an Indian designer in collaboration with the JOBS Project. The participants then requested EDBM training to facilitate business planning and business management and improve marketing linkages to further develop their capacity. JOBS Training Manager Mr. S. M. Shahidullah, and Deputy Training Manager Ms. Mafruha Alam, conducted the course. ■

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