

Empowerment of Rural Bangladesh Women

Since FY2011, Shiseido has been promoting the activity for rural Bangladesh women to improve their social status and support their success. This activity is an initiative aiming to not only conduct business but also resolve the concerns and social issues of the women who live in the rural areas of Bangladesh by utilizing the know-how owned by Shiseido. In September 2015, the activity was selected as a model activity of the "Business Call to Action (BCtA)" led by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Shiseido is the first Asian cosmetics company to receive this recognition.



Current Initiatives

From 2018, we have begun showing a short movie in seven areas in Bangladesh. This is our new initiative for local women, in addition to the workshops we have held in villages in the country, to make them aware of women's empowerment.

We aim to encourage Bangladeshi women to recognize their original beauty and reflect on their own lives through the movie that introduces the brand concept, "Shining Original Beauty," of Les DIVAS, a line of products specially developed for and sold in Bangladesh.

On March 8, 2018, we held the first movie screening event to commemorate International Women's Day. As many as 300 students visited the university in Tangail, our activity base, to watch the movie. The film depicts a girl who overcomes various difficulties to become truly independent. Students who watched the movie said, "There are many women in our country who wish to live on their own. The film made me believe we can do it," "Women tend to give up moving forward when confronted with failures or difficulties, but the movie taught me there are ways to overcome such obstacles," or "I think not only the women but all the men in Bangladesh should watch this film, from which I learned a lot of lessons to change our society."

Wishing to help many Bangladeshi women step forward, we will continuously hold screening events all over the country.



Movie screening event



A student being interviewed after watching the movie

History of this Activity

Compared with East Asia which has achieved a certain degree of growth even outside the urban areas and in which women's social status has been also improving, in South Asia, there are more emerging countries and many different types of issues including economic disparities, gender gap, etc.

Under such a situation, although many issues are related to health and hygiene, the rural Bangladesh women are highly aware of beauty and skincare. Therefore, with focus on this area, we were able to start our activity with the strong support from the local NGO, etc.

About Bangladesh (Excerpt from the website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan)

When Bangladesh became an independent country from Pakistan and established the national flag, it is said that Bangladesh used the Japanese national flag as a model. From that time, it has been a pro-Japanese country that has a feeling of friendship and admiration for Japan.



Start from Living Together in the Local Community

In the first year, by living under the same roof with the families in the local rural area for a total of 4 months, the project members started from understanding their living conditions and customs as well as listening to the concerns and dreams that the rural women have.



Rural area of Bangladesh

From there, various issues caused by their lifestyles, customs, and other factors came in sight.

<p>Life/Custom</p>	<p>Men have the right to make important decisions in the household (Family plan, divorce, working, household budget, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot feel confident about oneself • Not good at speaking in front of people • Cannot take actions voluntarily
<p>Health/Nutrition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dietary habit of taking plenty of sugar, oil and salt, and a lack of knowledge regarding the effect of this habit on health • Late night meal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unhealthy/sick due to biased nutrition • Skin troubles such as pimples
<p>Hygiene/Beauty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lack of correct hygiene and beauty knowledge (Hand washing, effect of UV rays on skin, etc.) • There are no cosmetics that Muslims can use without worries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unhealthy/sick due to unsanitary living practices • Skin aging caused due to a lack of appropriate skincare



Rural area of Bangladesh

Development of Skincare Products with Halal Certification*

The project members, who lived with the rural women, had been thinking how to respond to the women's wishes to become beautiful, youthful and healthy, same wishes that even the Bangladesh women also have, by using Shiseido's technologies and know-how.



Les DIVAS

* Approved by a halal certification body as an item manufactured by using the ingredients and processes recognized as legal under the Muslim law and permitted to be used by Muslims.

Although there is no sufficient and correct beauty knowledge, the local women, who wish to become healthy, beautiful and youthful, are highly aware of beauty. Especially, they don't take any correct UV-ray protection measures in spite of the environment exposed to strong UV rays since suncare products are easily removed by sweat and water; therefore, their skins receive adverse impact from the environment and many women look older than their actual age.

In addition, many Bangladesh people are Muslim and there are not many products which comply with their strict rules (products with Halal Certification). We heard that many of the women said "I wish there were Halal-compliant products because I can use them without any worries".



Les DIVAS

- Cleansing foam: 1 type
- Moisturizing gel: 2 types
- Sunscreen: 1 type



Acquisition of Halal Certification
Shiseido Vietnam Factory



The women who used this product said, "I can use it without any worries because it is Halal-compliant" and "My skin got soft"

Development of Original Sunscreen Technology from this Activity

The local climate is not only with strong UV rays but also hot and humid. Regular sun care products are easily removed by sweat and water. This has been one of the concerns of the local women.



Women using "Les DIVAS" sunscreen

When researchers saw their situation, they felt the necessity of a sunscreen product with high UV-ray protection function which can maintain the effect even after sweating. Therefore, they turned their attention to the minerals and other components of water and sweat and succeeded in developing the original technology "WetForce" that provides enhanced protection against UV rays when in contact with sweat or water. This technology is currently utilized for sunscreen products* which are sold all over the world.



Hearing by research members



SHISEIDO Sun care



ANESSA

Progress on Workshops by Local Women (Awareness-Raising Activity)

With “Les DIVAS” as the approach, we have been promoting educational activities such as workshop on health/beauty, and improving daily living habitats through the flip chart show which was created in the local language (Bengali). This is also an important initiative of this project. The workshops are led by local female salespersons who have received trainings.

Many of the workshop participants and women who used this product became more proactive in getting involved with the society and commented, “I now like my skin,” “The opportunities to go out on my own increased,” and “I told other people that I feel happy because I could change my consciousness and behavior.”



Filip chart show for awareness-raising activity (in Bengali)



Awareness-raising activity (workshop)

Positive impact by this project in the rural villages in Bangladesh

(Period : Jan.2014 to Dec.2015)

