

The state of social enterprise in Bangladesh

Social enterprise activity in Bangladesh is growing. We set out to quantify social enterprise activity in Bangladesh. We surveyed 149 social enterprises and found that:

A young social enterprise scene:

Bangladeshi social enterprises are young and so are their leaders.

Average years in operation

6

most leaders are aged

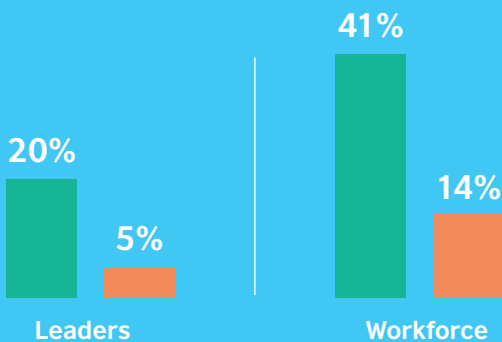
under 35

Social enterprise is growing:

Bangladeshi social enterprises have an average of 22 full-time equivalent staff and average turnover of around £21,000 (BDT 2,134,475). Most expect staff numbers and turnover to increase in the coming year.

Women and social enterprise:

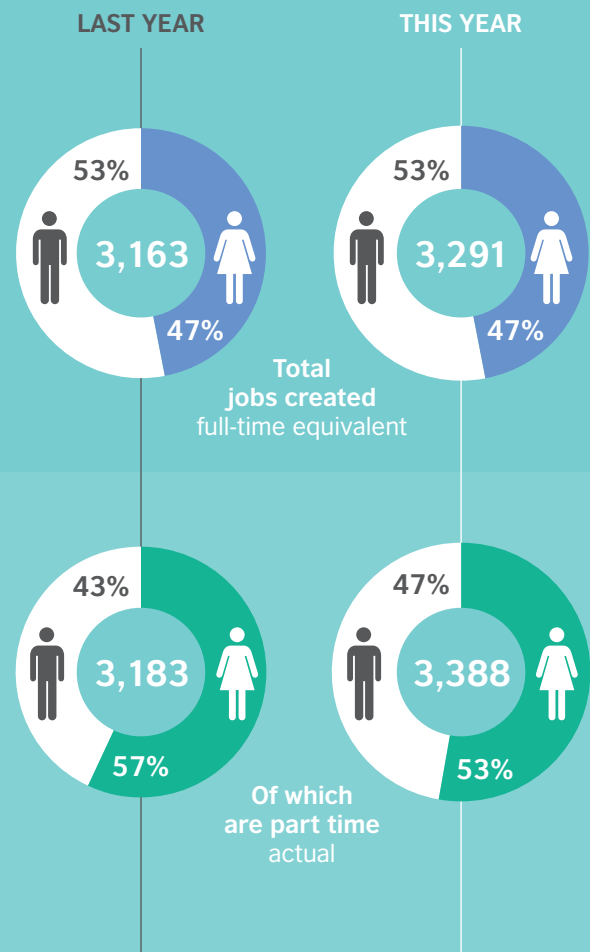
A fifth of Bangladeshi social enterprises are led by women – significantly higher than in mainstream business (5%). Women in social enterprises make up 41% of the full-time equivalent workforce, more than double than in the general workforce.



Social enterprises



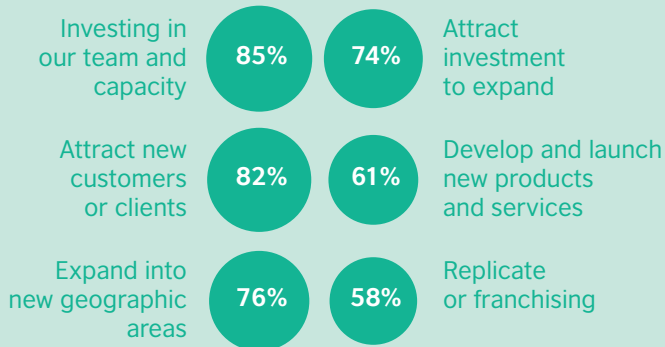
Mainstream business



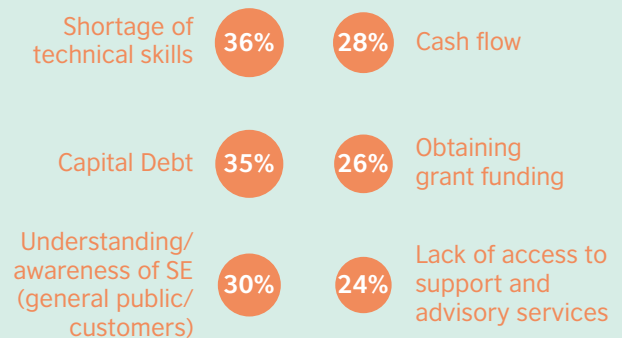
Growth is set to continue:

Growth is set to continue: Most Bangladeshi social enterprises expect their venture to grow and they have wide-ranging growth plans – particularly expanding into new geographic areas and developing new products and services, through investment in their teams and by attracting capital to expand. Two-thirds of Bangladeshi social enterprises hope to replicate or franchise their business models.

GROWTH PLANS



BARRIERS



Sectors

The highest proportion of social enterprises work in the education and seek to promote education and literacy as key objectives, even if they operate across other sectors. Many social enterprises focusing on employment creation as a key objective of their operations.

Lack of technical skills is seen as the biggest barrier to growth, followed by access to debt finance, lack of social enterprise awareness and cash flow constraints. Lack of understanding of social enterprise is seen as a significant barrier to growth, with a quarter of social enterprises feeling it is constraining them.



TOP

Education
32%



Services
26%



Manufacturing
6%



Retail
5%



Infrastructure development and maintenance
1%



Housing
1%

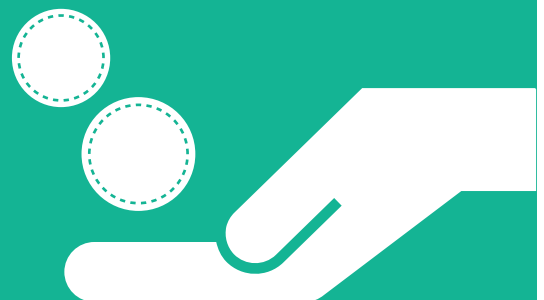
LOWER



Lack of technical skills is the main barrier

Finance and funding

Donations and grants are the most common sources of funding, with few social enterprises securing concessional loans or equity. Limited capital supply is seen as the primary funding constraint.



Based on the very small unrepresentative sampling process, there may be as many as 150,000 social enterprises currently operating in Bangladesh, with growth expected.