

# RECOVERY & ADVANCEMENT OF INFORMAL SECTOR EMPLOYMENT(RAISE)

Empowering Futures, Elevating Lives



The **Recovery & Advancement of Informal Sector Employment (RAISE)** project was launched by PKSF in February 2022, in partnership with the World Bank, to address the needs of micro-entrepreneurs in Bangladesh’s urban and peri-urban informal sectors. This initiative seeks to bridge skills, financial access, and gender gaps identified in a 2018 Gap Analysis Study. The project targets COVID-affected individuals and low-income youth by providing training, financial support, and employment opportunities through inclusive finance, skills development, and an apprenticeship system. This report outlines the project’s activities, achievements, and impacts over the 2023–24 period.

## OBJECTIVES

The project has three primary objectives:

1. **Restore COVID-19 Affected Micro-Enterprises:** Provide inclusive financial support and capacity development for recovery and growth.
2. **Enhance Productivity of Youth Entrepreneurs:** Develop entrepreneurial and technical skills among young, low-income micro-entrepreneurs.
3. **Promote Sustainable Employment through Apprenticeships:** Connect youth from low-income backgrounds with sustainable jobs via skill-based apprenticeships.

## FACT & FIGURE

Sl.	Fact	Figure
1	Name of the program	Recovery & Advancement of Informal Sector Employment(RAISE)
2	Duration	05 Years (July 2022 – December 2026)
3	Supported By	PKSF, The World Bank
4	No. of project participants	2502 (Male-363 and Female-2139)
5	No. of staff	04
6	Working Location	35 Branch offices (MF) in Jashore, Jhenidha, Meherpur, Khulna and Shatkhira districts.

## TARGET PARTICIPANTS

1. COVID-affected micro-entrepreneurs
2. Low-income youth and micro-entrepreneurs
3. Low-income youth in apprenticeship programs

## KEY PROJECT ACTIVITIES 2023-24

The RAISE project is designed to enhance economic inclusion for marginalized youth and micro-entrepreneurs in Bangladesh's urban and peri-urban areas. The main components are:

### 1. Inclusive Finance:



Loans were disbursed to support the growth and recovery of micro-enterprises among prior borrowers and newly trained apprentices. 8.5 Crore BDT was disbursed to the 853 target members as loan.

### 2. Capacity Enhancement Training:

**Risk Management and Business Continuity (RMBC):** Trained micro-entrepreneurs to incorporate risk management strategies to withstand future shocks. 850 participants received RMBC Training.

**Business Management and Entrepreneurship Development (BMED):** 320 participants from youth entrepreneur who has 2-3 years business experience backgrounds received training in essential business and life skills, allowing them to manage and expand their enterprises effectively. It is continuing.

**Apprenticeship Program:** An informal sector of "ustad-shagred" (master craft person-apprentice) was implemented, involving 300 apprentices and 67 master craftsperson across various trades. The trades included Beauty Care, IT Support, Dressmaking, Welding and Fabrication, Mobile Phone servicing, and Motorcycle Servicing, among others.



### 3. Selection and Training of Master Craftsperson:

70 master craftsperson were selected and trained to supervise apprentices, increase high-quality skills transfer and mentorship and ensuring job placement.

### 4. Community Outreach and Psychometric Profiling:

1,331 individuals participated in the community outreach program, helping in the selection of apprentices and master craftsperson and youth entrepreneur.



## IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

The RAISE project has significantly impacted the informal sector by building



capacity, offering financial support, and creating employment opportunities. The following highlights reflect the project's accomplishments:

- **BMED Training:** Entrepreneurs who received BMED training and loans have established stable businesses, contributing to the local economy and job creation.
- **Apprenticeship Program:** Youth from low-income families, including both male and female participants, gained valuable skills and experience through six-month

apprenticeships. Some trainees have transitioned to entrepreneurship, while others secured employment in their fields.

- **MCP Orientation:** Master craftspeople, serving as mentors, helped apprentices build skills and gain confidence, facilitating a successful entry into the job market.
- **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** Program graduates are formally recognized for their skills, enhancing their employment prospects and professional credibility.
- **Community Outreach:** Through community outreach, the project engaged over 1,300 individuals, raising awareness of training opportunities and supporting local recruitment.



## PARTICIPANT'S REFLECTION

Md. Bipul Biswas, a 24-year-old from Khorki Dakshinpara in Jessore Sadar Upazila, is the second of four sons in a financially struggling family. Due to limited resources, Bipul had to abandon his education after the 8th grade in 2015. He helped his father, a day laborer, but faced limited opportunities to improve their circumstances. The COVID-19 pandemic worsened their situation, making his dreams of acquiring skills seem distant. In 2024, Bipul discovered the RAISE project by the Rural Reconstruction Foundation (RRF) with PKSF, which offered an apprenticeship program and a stipend to support trainees. Eager to change his path, he joined the program, dedicating six days a week to learning practical skills at a workshop. His Master Crafts Person, Md. Rowshan Ali, recognized his enthusiasm and potential for success.

Bipul now envisions a brighter future, with a goal of opening his own workshop to support other unemployed youth. His journey from hardship to hope demonstrates how opportunities like the RAISE project can transform lives, inspiring him to uplift others facing similar struggles.

