



SUCCESS STORY

Strengthening Local NGO Capacity

SSFP helps its 26 network NGOs build their organizational capacity through targeted training and support.



Photo by: BAHMANEH

BAMANEH leadership celebrates the completion of its HR manual in a handover ceremony.

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**— Mr. Habibur Rahman,
project director, BAMANEH**

In its fifth year, the Smiling Sun Franchise Program (SSFP) focused on strengthening the organizational capacity of the network NGOs. In line with USAID Forward, SSFP's subcontractors, CBSG and Panagora collaborated to design and facilitate an evidence-based capacity building program to help the NGOs become more self-reliant and be organizationally sound enough to access direct donor funds in the future.

First, the 26 NGOs were led through a self-assessment process to determine their institutional needs. This was a first for these NGOs. As Ms. Shamima Sultana of SSKS said, *“We had an assessment before, but the results were never shared with us. This debriefing allows us to reflect on our findings and assess our strengths and weaknesses.”*

Based on the institutional self-assessments, SSFP and its partners developed a plan for building the capacity of network NGOs. This included training sessions on management, communications, project design, budgeting, and grant writing. As NGOs worked through the organizational development process, a proactive “Help Desk” provided ongoing support.

Further, SSFP identified ten high performing NGOs to receive additional targeted support. This included developing customized institutional strengthening plans and helping to create a human resources policy manual, which is one of the most important building blocks of a small business and a critical step in accessing direct donor funds.

As a result, 26 network NGOs have become stronger and more independent organizations. A measure of this progress is that five NGOs now have a complete human resources policies and procedures manual, developed in a participatory way in each NGO, and ratified by their boards. SSFP is now working with the remaining 21 NGOs to help them finalize their policy manuals.

Mr. Habibur Rahman, the project director from BAMANEH, one of the high performing NGOs, commented, *“I see my organization greatly benefiting from the capacity building program, not just the SSFP health project. We can now take steps to improve the overall performance of our organization.”*