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CAPABILITY STATEMENT

Exploring new market opportunities.

OUR ENGAGEMENT IN SKILLS, JOBS, AND INCOME (SJI)

Helvetas' Skills, Jobs, and Income (SJI) Working Area aims to create new opportunities for youth and disadvantaged groups through market-relevant skills development, private sector engagement, and financial inclusion. Our ambition is to ensure that underserved women and men—including those in humanitarian contexts gain access to decent employment and sustainable income opportunities.

Bangladesh is set to graduate from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in 2026 and aspires to Middle-Income Country (MIC) status by 2031. Achieving these goals requires creating 1.48 million additional jobs and accelerating the transition to a more formal and competitive economy. Despite significant investments in vocational training, a substantial skills mismatch persists between workforce supply and market demand.

At the same time, the climate crisis poses major threats to Bangladesh's economic stability. Climate-induced

hazards—cyclones, flooding, sea-level rise, salinity intrusion, and resource degradation—are likely to displace millions, while rapid and unplanned urbanization intensifies socioeconomic vulnerabilities.

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which constitute the backbone of the economy, are central to promoting sustainable development and creating decent employment—particularly for youth and women.

Helvetas has been present in Bangladesh since 2000, working to address the root causes of poverty through systemic, market-based, and climate-resilient interventions. We promote sustainable agriculture, strengthen livelihood resilience, and invest in skills development and employment pathways for underserved communities.

OUR EXPERTISE

INCLUSIVE SYSTEMS APPROACH (ISA)

Since 2009, Helvetas has been a pioneer in applying the Market Systems Development (MSD) approach—now widely known as the Inclusive Systems Approach (ISA). ISA promotes long-term, scalable changes by influencing behaviours, institutional practices, and market functions. Our goal is to ensure that underserved communities benefit equitably while ensuring environmental, social, and institutional sustainability. We believe that true scale and sustainability come only from systemic change. ISA identifies constraints within market systems and facilitates strategic opportunities to improve their performance for farmers, micro-entrepreneurs, workers, and other primary stakeholders. Local ownership lies at

the heart of our methodology, positioning Helvetas as a facilitator, not an implementer.

ISA is anchored on three core principles:

- A clear vision for sustainable and scalable change
- A deep understanding of market systems and their actors
- A facilitative approach that empowers local partners to lead the change process



Private Sector Development (PSD)

Access to affordable and relevant advisory services is essential for producers to sustain and grow their income. Since 2009, we have strengthened the ecosystem of Local Service Providers (LSPs) who are embedded in communities and offer tailored services across value chains in partnership with government extension departments and private companies.

Through LSPs and MSME support, Helvetas:

- Enhances entrepreneurship and business planning.
- Facilitates access to finance.
- Provides technical guidance.
- Strengthens market linkages with buyers, aggregators, and financial institutions.

Skills Development and Employment

Helvetas promotes a comprehensive approach to skills development, aligned with the National Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework (NTVQF). We enhance the capacity of Training and Employment Service Providers (TESPs) to offer quality, market-driven training, particularly benefiting women and young people in underserved areas.

We employ results-based financing (RBF), where training providers are incentivized based on the number of graduates successfully employed—enhancing accountability, quality, relevance, and sustainability.

Sustainable food systems

Helvetas promotes climate-smart agriculture and agroecological practices to increase household incomes and improve nutrition while addressing the impacts of climate change. Our interventions strengthen the capacities of food system actors to address constraints related to soil health, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, market inefficiencies, and consumer behaviour.

We support:

- Sustainable land use, agroforestry, and LEISA.
- Local collection centres to improve farmers' market access.
- Strengthening nutritious and resilient food value chains.
- Urban food system transformation and healthy diet promotion.

OUR FOCUS AREAS



Working after skills training ©Helvetas/Qazi Shamim Hasan

Private Sector Development(PSE)

Business Skills Development

We support MSMEs, entrepreneurs, and LSPs in enhancing competitiveness and adopting innovations that expand opportunities in both farm and non-farm sectors.

Promoting Financial Inclusion

Helvetas enhances entrepreneurs' financial literacy and links them to suitable financial services. Through LSPs, entrepreneurs access:

- Support in navigating formal financial services
- Connections with financial institutions
- Guidance on innovative financial products
- Better risk management capabilities

Governance of Market Systems

We engage government, private sector, civil society, and media actors to improve:

- Rules, incentives, and enabling environment
- Coordination and dialogue platforms
- Accountability, transparency, and institutional performance

Skills Development and Employment

Strengthening Skills Development Systems

We enhance government and private training providers' capacities to deliver:

- Market-relevant VET
- Career guidance
- Apprenticeships and internships
- Upskilling and reskilling initiatives
- Inclusive training opportunities for youth, women, and persons with disabilities

Digitalised Training

We integrate e-learning and blended learning solutions to:

- Improve accessibility
- Support flexible learning
- Enable workplace-based training
- Reduce training costs
- Support continuous upskilling

Decent Work

Helvetas promotes decent employment aligned with the four pillars of the ILO:

- Job creation
- Improved working conditions
- Social protection
- Social dialogue

Green Economy

Nature-Based Solutions (NbS)

We scale climate-resilient agroecology and NbS by strengthening community and institutional capacities



LSP explaining compost production. ©Helvetas/K M Asad to adopt sustainable farming systems that conserve resources, improve soil health, and enhance food safety.

Green Jobs

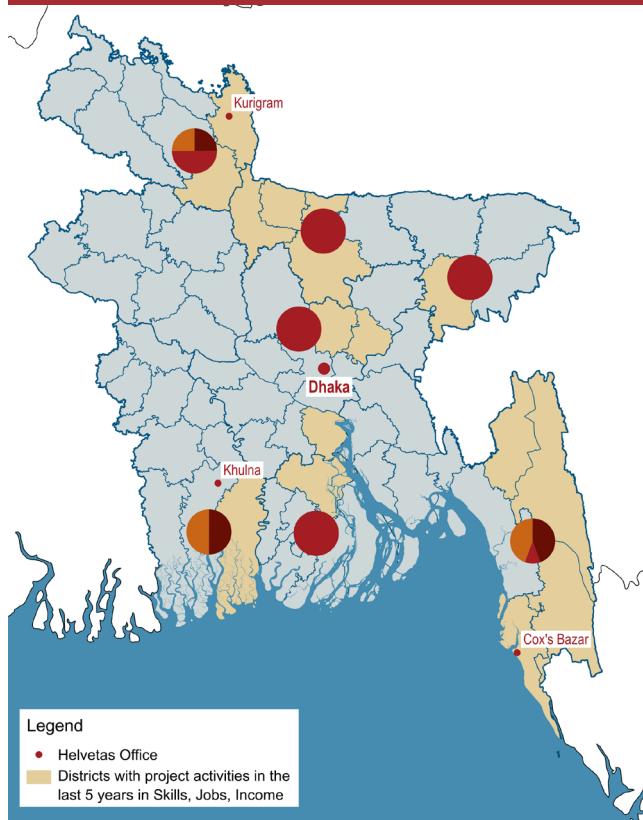
Helvetas supports enterprises and workers to transition to green production by promoting:

- Renewable energy solutions
- Resource-efficient technologies
- Green standards and compliance
- New employment pathways in the green economy

Key Milestones

- » 100,000 producers/entrepreneurs benefitted from PSD activities.
- » 80,000 people trained on business management and value chain development.
- » 10,000 people trained through skills development programmes.
- » 8,000 people secured wage employment.
- » 1,000 apprentices successfully completed skills training.

OUR EXPERIENCE



Sustainable Food Production

Key Results

- 120,000 farmers adopted climate-smart agriculture and sustainable land-use practices.

Key Insights

- Strengthening farmers' disaster risk management capacities is essential.
- Sustainable nutrition outcomes require both food availability and consumer behaviour change.



Farmers adapt their practices. ©Helveta/K M Asad

Skill Development

Key Results

- 21,500 young people trained in market-driven trades.
- 17,100 women and men secured gainful employment or self-employment.

Key Insights

- Sustainability requires strong local skills development ecosystems.
- Blended learning (e-learning coupled with practical sessions) enhances access for women and people in remote areas women often burden with domestic and care work.

Private Sector Development

Key Results

- 1,100+ Local Service Providers trained.
- 150,000 farmers received technical and business support across value chains.

Key Insights

- Community-embedded LSPs drive trust, knowledge sharing, and sustainability and has proved beneficial especially for the most underserved producers.
- Private sector must be recognised as a system actor, not just a service provider.



Learning new skills. ©Helveta/K M Asad