

MICRO INDUSTRIES DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE SOCIETY (MIDAS)

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES THROUGH JANUARY 21, 1982

ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS have been held periodically beginning on 24 March, 1980.

Subsequently meeting have been held on 5 May 1980, 18 December 1980, 2 February 1981, 23 April 1981, 25 May 1981, 29 May 1981.

A MIDAS EVALUATION MEETING was held in September 1981 with USAID, The Asia Foundation (TAF) and MIDAS representatives present.

COORDINATION MEETINGS are held on every working Friday between USAID, TAF and MIDAS executive staff.

INCORPORATION AND REGISTRATION is underway.

External Resources Division (ERD) registration is expected by February 1st.

Joint Stock Company Registration will probably take another two months.

A Joint meeting was held with the USAID Legal Advisor to work out changes required in amendments of incorporation in preparation for independent status on mid September.

STAFF DEVELOPMENTS is now close to completion.

Director, Mamoon-al-Rasheed joined on 2 February 1981.

3 Guards have been appointed.

A Secretary joined in March, 1981 and resigned on 4 January 1982, and will be replaced.

A Steno Typist was appointed in October.

Information Officer, Mohammad Selim, joined us in November 1981.

We have made use of a large number of consultants. These include:

Mr. Rezaul Karim Bhuiya,

Mr. Shamsul Alam Mia,

Mrs. Phyllis Foreman,

Mr. Bruce McCartney, and

Dr. Clarence Maloney

Dr. Philip Gross has also served as a project manager from October 1981 until just prior to the arrival of Dr. Owens.

Recent and Pending Appointments

1. Dr. Raymond Lee Owens has joined MIDAS as consultant as of January 1, 1982, through September 15, 1982. He will work both as a consultant on project evaluation and development. There is discussion presently underway to use his skills also as a film maker.
2. A decision has been made to hire Mr. Noor (as mentioned above) as administrative secretary for MIDAS. He is a man of very extensive experience (the last five years with USAID) who can be expected to grow with MIDAS.
3. Mr. Alam Mia has been hired for a three month consultancy to prepare a portion of his report on handloom for publication, to work with World Vision in refining its project, and to develop a handloom project.
4. We are continuing to expand our roster of consultants. We are presently in search of a good engineering consultant to assist us with appropriate technology as it becomes project specific (see below).

Office organization is now fully operational, but we will be handling petty cash only until registration formalities are complete.

Our Information Services are becoming operational.

Rural Industries Study Project (RISP) Reports have been distributed to about 50 Private Voluntary Organizations (PVO's).

Mrs. Foreman's report on information services is being systematically implemented.

A file on the small and cottage industry related activities of 40 PVO's has been compiled.

Journals and information materials from India, the United States, the United Kingdom, and China are regularly acquisitioned.

We have almost completed a review of relevent information for MIDAS in the libraries of Dacca.

A card index of approximately 2500 books in the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) library has been completed.

We have assembled the publications of 15 PVO's in Bangladesh, whose work is especially relevant to MIDAS.

We have begun a systematic newspaper clippings file on topics of MIDAS interest.

We are also beginning a cumulative index of topics covered in the journals and other publications in the MIDAS library.

MIDAS has held several meetings for PVO's, which included:

Discussions with 11 PVO's on the handloom industry,

Discussions with 22 PVO's and Andy Oerke of Partnership for Productivity (PFP)

Discussions with another 22 PVO's with Barie Axtell of Intermediate Technology International Services (ITIS) on food processing.

MIDAS has received a large number of visitors, which include:

Mr. Richard - Intermediate Technical Development Group, United Kingdom (ITDG,UK)

Mr. Andy Oerke - PFP, USA - Field visits were also arranged

Mr. M. Mansur-ul-Huda, Secretary/Director, Appropriate Technology Development Association (ATDA), Lucknow, India.

Mr. Frank Post - Foreign Affairs Officer, National Technical Information Service, United States Department of Commerce (NTIS), USA.

Mr. Barie Axtell, Food Processing Expert of ITIS, UK.

Mr. James S. Brown - Transition Technology Incorporated (TTI), USA.

Mr. James E. Hochschwender, Director of Programs, PFP.

MIDAS has arranged for a number of short-term, honorary consultancies:

Mrs. Meherunnessa Islam to advise the YMCA on food processing,

Mr. Sharaf gave additional advice to the YMCA on food processing,

Mr. Sengupta advised KARIKA, the Christian Health Care Project (CHCP), the YMCA and the Bogra Dustha Kalyan Sangstha on Seri culture,

Dr. Clarence Maloney has advised the Christian Committee for the Development of Bangladesh (CCDB) on their area development project.

Government Linkages with MIDAS appear to be well established with BSCIC, Bangladesh Handloom Board (BHB), the Planning Ministry, the Ministry of Industries, and the Investment Corporation of Bangladesh. We are endeavouring to keep cooperation flowing in both directions.

MIDAS representatives have attended two international workshops:

Dr. Clarence Maloney attended the regional meeting of NTIS in Delhi,

Mr. Mamoon attended a workshop on small scale enterprise sponsored by USAID in Indonesia. His report on that visit is now being prepared for distribution.

Project under consideration by MIDAS:

Six projects have been independently submitted to MIDAS, which are under stages of development.

1. The most promising project received so far by MIDAS is from the Christian Commission for the Development of Bangladesh (CCDB), an experimental program to limit population along with small enterprise development. The highest quality of input from MIDAS has gone into this project, including direct input from Jason Brown and James Hochschwender. Requested modifications in the proposal are now underway. Mamoon-al-Rasheed and Ray Owens are jointly serving as consultants on this project.
2. A second project of some promise has been developed by World Vision to service handloom weavers in its Chanpara village camp. Mr. Alam Mia has been working with this project, which requires a considerable technical input. Mr. Mia will continue to serve as consultant to refine the proposal, hopefully into fundable shape.
3. A proposal has been received from the Village Education Resource Center (VERC) for the training of potters and other village extension work. There remain a number of important questions about the purpose and design of this project. Ray Owens will serve as consultant on this project and will be making a fact-finding visit in the next few days.
4. A letter of inquiry was submitted to MIDAS (through Peter Leifert) by Mr. Aslam of the Aarong Outreach Team about assisting Chakma craftsmen. Although the concerns he expresses are greatly appreciated, it was explained that his request would need to be channeled through an existing organization. He is exploring such a means of routing the proposal and will be back in touch with MIDAS. Ray Owens will serve as consultant should a promising project emerge.
5. An inquiry has been received from the Bangladesh-Swiss Agricultural Project in Satnala. This is another case of a request without a viable organization, and unfortunately prospects do not look bright that one can be reorganized (the previous organization, a weavers cooperative, disintegrated after its responsible officer decamped with its funds). However, as it does involve weavers and Alam Mia has consulted on this project previously, he will make one last effort to see what might be constructively achieved. His report will be submitted in the next few weeks.

6. A request has been received from Mirpur Multipurpose Cooperative Society (MICO) to continue funding recently discontinued by Radda Barnen (The Swedish Save the Children Federation). Investigation by Alam Mia of this organization (which is primarily a weaving operation) reveals an administratively top heavy organization running at a substantial loss. Although the organization in its present structure does not seem promising Mr. Mia has devoted considerable attention to it, and has requested a revised project proposal and budget. Mr. Mia will be responsible for followup on this project.

Project under development by MIDAS.

MIDAS possesses within its staff talents and interests which can appropriately go in search of viable projects and organizations, even though the role of MIDAS remains that of midwife, not parent. Several such initiatives are now underway.

1. Weaving Project. A proposal has been under development by Alam Mia, which is now in search of an institutional home. One of the activities of Mr. Mia in his consultancy will be completing the delivery of this project and the location of adoptive parents.
2. Appropriate Technology Project. A series of projects have come to the notice of MIDAS in a variety of ways which fall under the competence of our new consultant, Ray Owens. These also line up closely with interests of MIDAS Information Officer, Mohammad Selim, and he has requested that he be permitted to devote about ten percent of his time in serving as a consultant on these projects along with Dr. Owens. Permission has been given for him to do this, with the clear understanding that the pace and quality of his work as information officer must not suffer. As many of these projects require considerable bibliographic research his participation is particularly needed.
 - a. A letter has come to Peter Leifert from Intermediate Technology Industrial Services (London) about the supply of a consultant to assist in raising the quality of the indigenous production of shuttles, pirns, bobbins, reeds, etc. This follows upon our inquiry to ITIS, and we have indicated our interest in following it up (the copy of the MIDAS letter to ITIS is attached). Ray Owens, Mohammad Selim and Alam Mia will be visiting the Comilla Cooperative Workshop and perhaps other workshops as well to ascertain their interest in manufacturing handloom spares and also to assess market demand and other factors.
 - b. Low-head Turbines. ITIS has had an interest for some time in low head turbines which would be useful for electric power generation as well as irrigation from the slow moving alluvial rivers of Bangladesh. MIDAS feels that these may have considerable potential in Bangladesh and might be appropriately used or manufactured in PVO projects here. Therefore we are requesting more information about this project (see a proposal dated 14 December 1979), as well as other projects and proposals of ITIS for our evaluation.

- c. Evaluation of Promising Appropriate Technologies. MIDAS solicits the suggestions of its constituent bodies in locating, especially felicitous fabrications sympathetic to the needs of this verdant land. Two have recently been brought to our notice by Cyril McAleese, Chief Extension Advisor, Bangladesh Australia Sugar Industry Project, CEN-(C), Road 95, Gulshan, Dacca (tel. 303628). We have contacted Mr. McAleese and he will be bringing an improved plow to show us, along with data on the relative efficiency of the plow in comparison with the variety commonly used in Bangladesh. He also is testing a sub-surface fertilizer distributor and will discuss it with us when his current tests have been completed (in about ten months). We will be combing the literature for other equipments, especially those which have shown favourable results in tests here. MIDAS will be publishing a paper on some such technologies which we feel could very profitably be manufactured or used by PVO's in their development work in Bangladesh.
- d. 16 MM Film on Appropriate Technologies. A suggestion has come from Peter Leifert and Suzanne Wallen that the skills of Dr. Owens as a film-maker be used during the time he is here, especially as the other aspects of MIDAS begin to hum along. Because of present needs and because of the need^{to} arrange for rental of equipment, the time necessary to edit a film after it has been shot (about four times as long as the actual shooting) it does not seem wise to undertake such a project until after September 15, 1982, but he will be drafting treatments and budgets for such films. One of these could deal with appropriate technologies, including Merrick Lockwood's external combustion engine.

3. Marketing Project. Peter Leifert has recently received a Project Paper from AID/Washington, which he has routed to MIDAS. The paper in part states:

In particular, the Small Rural Enterprise Development Project will look at ways of facilitating the development of contract production or sub-contracting relationships between larger manufacturing and trading companies who serve national and international markets and smaller firms located outside major metropolitan centers. By focussing on the linkages and complementarities between small and large firms, this project should help to bridge the gap between efforts of the Agency which are aimed at creating business opportunities for U.S. enterprises and project which seek to assist indigenous small-scale industrial development.

This project is also intended to augment the supply of technical assistance available to missions to assist them in addressing marketing problems in rural enterprise projects. (pp.4-5).

We have assigned Dr. Owens, our most slippery wordsmith, to see if he can pry loose some of this proffered cash and assistance for projects of interest to MIDAS. One such project, submitted to MIDAS early on, is for the development and international marketing of art-quality nokshi kanthas. Efforts have been underway in several sectors to develop high quality production. The Bangladesh Ethnic Arts Foundation Council has been getting encouraging results in Kotchandpur and in villages near Rajshahi. The Jamalpur Project of BRAC is doing well and A.H. Abed indicated in discussions with Dr. Owens on January 18, 1982 that production of high quality nokshi kantas by the end of this year will have saturated available markets within Bangladesh and will need to develop overseas markets in order to provide income to the skilled artisans that are being developed. He says about 120 women in Jamalpur now make nokshi kanthas and that of these about 30 are now able to make art-quality kanthas. Sister Mike in conjunction with Mrs. Patee of the MIDAS Board, has arranged production of some remarkably fine kanthas for the Sonargaon Hotel. Only the briefest discussion has so far been held with Sister Mike (she and Dr. Owens will be meeting again on 22 January), but it appears that she also is working with an expanding group of talented women who will soon need markets outside Bangladesh. There are still a number of technical problems in conjunction with nokshi kanthas. One of these is the development of color-fast indigenous dyes for thread; for the moment this has been handled by using imported thread; but an indigenous solution is possible and preferable. There are also matters of shipping arrangements, preparation of brochures, and genuine research on meanings inherent in kanthas. A first class 16 MM film could be of great assistance in penetrating international markets, and Dr. Owens has been asked to prepare a treatment and budget for such film.

Suggestions and proposals are solicited for other products which might fit under the guidelines of the Marketing Project. These can either be addressed to MIDAS or to Dr. Owens. However, it would be preferable to first discuss your ideas with Dr. Owens before putting them in written form.

4. Shrimp Project. Jason Brown in his recent review of MIDAS stressed that fish pond development and other fisheries enterprises, particularly involving weaker sections of the population, would be appropriate to the scope of MIDAS. The director of MIDAS hails from Hatia and cooperatives in that region, particularly on Char Jabbar have frequently sought his help. He and Dr. Owens have been exploring possibilities. There is adjacent to Char Jabbar a Land Reclamation Project. (See Mohiuddin Ahmed for Nijera Kori, Land Reclamation Project Technical Report 5, Land, People and Embankment - A socio-Economic Study in Char Jabbar And Comments on Proposed Polder, Kingdom of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs Directorate General for International Co-operation and People's Republic of Bangladesh, Ministry of Flood Control, Water Resources and Power, Bangladesh Water Development Board, September 1981). The just cited document stresses:

The Land Reclamation Project feels that the profits of the new land should go to the people who need it most, the landless in particular, who lost their land because of debt, floods and erosion. These people should be given land, by providing them with means of production.

The Land Reclamation Project also feels that the selection of future of settlers should receive the highest attention. The necessity of involvement of future settlers in all stages of the pilot scheme has been emphasized. (pp. 1-2)

The project involves closing off the mouth of a small river and thereby reclaiming some 4,000 acres. The precise and best use of this land is not addressed in detail in the report, but other research (Robert R. Nathan Associates, Inc., Washington, D.C., Proposed Fisheries Components for An Agricultural Credit Project, Draft Final Report, Annex B for Bangladesh Bank Agricultural Credit Study Project, June 1979) suggests that shrimp cultivation in brackish waters, even before the sedimentation is completed, can bring income thirty times that achievable from rice cultivation. The just cited report also indicates the difficulties of shrimp farming in Bangladesh, to wit very poor integration of the steps from catch to export. Essentially ice, made from water with fecal matter in it, is used to ice the shrimp, usually in insufficient quality to keep the shrimp from beginning to spoil before they reach a cold storage unit. Then the polluted ice adversely affects the quality of the shrimp as it melts. In addition, the requirement to scald the shrimp to halt bacterial action in the heads prior to freezing is not consistently done. Unsanitary containers are also used to transport shrimp, etc. The consequence is that Bangladesh shrimp have poor reception in foreign markets and fetch prices 40 to 50 percent under the world price earned for Thai, Singapore, and other shrimp. This is despite the fact that the tiger shrimp (*Penaeus monodon*) grown in the warm waters of the Bay of Bengal are the largest in the world and inherently have superior market appeal. The solution is to integrate shrimp fisheries under control of fisheries cooperatives, keeping control of the operation and the profits right to the point of export. The Char Jabbar fisheries cooperatives of landless persons, well-known to Mr. Mamoon, and already being assisted by Nijera Kori, provide an excellent place to try this out. Dutch Aid is also very receptive to having such a genuinely ameliorative project given a try. Mr. Mamoon has contacts on the government side sufficient to assure that it gets a chance. We have been up-dating our information in many quarters. We have had discussions with Pascual A. Acosta (brackish Water Shrimp/fish Aquaculturalist) and Benjamin D. Tapiador, of the Aquaculture Development Project (ADB Funded) on technical matters and they are eager to consult with us formally or informally as needed. They are now installing a shrimp hatchery in Cox's Bazar and have been requested to explore the feasibility of installing another in Hatia (adjacent to Char Jabbar). We have had discussions with Shelly Feldman (20 January 1982) who has just completed a detailed socio-economic study of Bay area fisherman for FAO. Her study will not be out in published form for another month or so, but she synopsisized it for us. The most important finding of her study is to document the tremendous credit needs of fishermen. All of which underlines the necessity of building a credit component into the shrimp project. We had discussions with A.H. Abed, who originally (through his associate Andrew Jenkins) had suggested a project similar to that we envision. Abed is up to his ears in oral rehydration, village libraries, and literacy programs, but he was too interested to disassociate himself from the project (in which he expressed a keen interest in 1979). He has agreed to serve as an informal advisor. We are aware of intergroup rivalries here, but it is worth noting that Andrew Jenkins works both sides of the fence---he was also cited as a

major contributor by Nijera Kori: "the author is highly indebted to Mr. Andrew Jenkins whose incisive suggestions have meant much to him." (p.i.) We have a meeting scheduled on Saturday with Dee Deppert, one of the most sensitive and best informed fisheries experts in Bangladesh on the project. We will of course be meeting with Nijera Kori. As the project takes on more concrete shape will be making periodic reports. Mr. Mamoon and Mr. Ray Owens will serve as joint consultants on this project.