

BRAC expands Innovation Fund for Mobile Money in Bangladesh

In October 2015, BRAC announced an expansion of Innovation Fund for Mobile Money project in Bangladesh. This project is funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The grant enables BRAC to experiment with the use of digital financial services, including bKash, in efforts to reduce poverty. Already BRAC has initiated 10 pilots, ranging from school-fee payments to savings deposit. The new grant will support BRAC to scale pilots and transform the organizational systems to use mobile money efficiency and responsibly.

“The BRAC Innovation Fund represents a dynamic initiative that has provided a fantastic platform for learning about mobile money and how it can accelerate financial inclusion and development. We are very pleased to be expanding this partnership with the Gates Foundation’s Financial Services for the Poor team.” said Dr. Muhammad Musa, Executive Director, BRAC.

Bangladesh currently has close to 30 million registered mobile money accounts. bKash, a subsidiary of BRAC Bank, has grown into the second-largest mobile money company in the world. Despite the rapid adoption, the technology remains challenging to the poor, who have lower levels of literacy and comfort with technology. Women are also underrepresented in use of mobile money.

BRAC, a Bangladesh-based non-profit organization, reaching 138 million people across 12 countries, is well known for its integrated and innovative approaches to community development. With its massive grassroots network of extension workers, large microfinance portfolio, and many cash subsidy programs, there are significant opportunities to go digital.

The original grant of \$2.6 million is now supplemented by an additional \$6.2 million for additional client education, policy and software development, and implementation. The partnership will continue until 2018.

Learn more about the Innovation Fund: <http://innovation.brac.net/fundchallenge/>

Read our lessons learned from BRAC’s first round of mobile money pilots:

http://innovation.brac.net/fundchallenge/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/BRAC_Lessons_Learned_Booklet_081215.pdf