

SHOMVOB:

REWARDING VERIFIED GENDER IMPACT



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## INTRODUCTION

Biniyog Briddhi (B-Briddhi) is a multi-year public-private development partnership between the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Roots of Impact, and LightCastle Partners, formed in 2020 to scale impact enterprises and grow the impact investment ecosystem in Bangladesh. The programme primarily supports enterprises across two pillars, namely Capacity Building and Catalytic Funding.

One of the programme's key funding instruments for enterprises is the **Impact-Ready Matching Fund (IRMF)**, a unique non-repayable conditional instrument that rewards enterprises with up to USD 100,000 for building rigorous impact measurement and management (IMM) systems through completing a series of structured deliverables. For select enterprises that demonstrate strong IMM capabilities with credible impact pathways, such as **Shomvob**, IRMF opens the door to a follow-on Impact-Linked Finance (ILF) opportunity that links up to USD 65,000 in financial rewards directly to the achievement of verified outcomes.

## SHOMVOB KEY HIGHLIGHTS

By connecting low-income women to better-paying jobs and measuring the income gains that followed, Shomvob demonstrated verified gender impact and earned a results-based financial reward through B-Briddhi's IRMF follow-on incentive scheme. The key results from Shomvob's IRMF journey are summarised below.

*USD 100,000 in financial rewards earned through the original IRMF from IMM system build-up*

*17.36% income growth for low-income women jobseekers achieved, against a 15% target*

*718 low-income women jobseekers reached, against a projected number of 800*

*USD 65,000 in follow-on funding earned through additional gender impact performance beyond business-as-usual*

Photo by siraanamwong from iStockphoto.



## THE PROBLEM SHOMVOB WAS BUILT TO SOLVE

With a total population of approximately 174 million people<sup>1</sup>, Bangladesh's employed population sits at around 72 million people – one of South Asia's largest labour markets. Blue- and silver-collar<sup>2</sup> workers account for around 39% of the national workforce and approximately 60% of the urban workforce, making frontline workers a dense segment of Bangladesh's urban workforce. The workforce is also deeply divided by gender. Female labour force participation stands at 38.4%, against 79.96% for men, and of the 22.87 million women who are employed, nearly 96% are in informal work<sup>3</sup>. Low-income women seeking formal employment face a market where verified job listings, fair wage information, and gender-inclusive hiring practices are absent.

Bangladesh's labour market has a **deep information asymmetry problem**, particularly for low-income women earning under USD 150 per month. Before platforms like Shomvob existed, jobseekers primarily relied on personal networks, brokers, or physically visiting employers to find work. Job listings were largely concentrated on white-collar-focused platforms, remaining largely inaccessible to most of Bangladesh's workforce. Critically, workers also had no reliable way to know what the correct pay scale was for a given role, leaving many jobseekers accepting below-market wages with insufficient information to negotiate otherwise.

Apart from the inability to access job listings, blue- and silver-collar jobseekers faced a skills gap with few structured, affordable pathways to develop the competencies expected by employers. The basic tools of formal employment such as interview preparation, CV writing, and workplace communication were largely inaccessible to workers as they didn't have the networks or resources to develop them independently.

Women faced an additional structural barrier. Many job postings on other sites didn't specify whether they were open to female applicants, leading to high application volumes, low conversion to employment, and eroded trust in the digital job search altogether. Women remained underemployed in other sectors aside from the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) industry, where a large female presence was already normalised by sheer volume. This was not because women weren't looking for work, but because the infrastructure to connect them to verified opportunities with fair wages did not yet exist.

## HOW SHOMVOB SOLVES THESE PROBLEMS

Aiming to reduce frictions in Bangladesh's labour market, Shomvob is a job-matching platform founded in 2022 that focuses on the blue- and silver-collar workforce. The enterprise was founded by three experienced co-founders, namely Rifad Hossain (CEO), Naqib Muhammad Faiyaz (CTO), and Hasib Rahman (COO). Shomvob was built around a single observation: that the workforce with the highest demand for job opportunities had the least access to them. The platform is highly accessible and easy to use, with a mobile-friendly interface

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1 World Bank. World Development Indicators: Population, Total — Bangladesh. 2024. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.PORTOTL?locations=BD>

2 Blue collar workers are typically those working hard, manual labour in industries and can be categorized under ILO ISCO-08 Major Groups 7 and 8 (Craft and Related Trades Workers, and Plant and Machine Operators, and Assemblers). Silver collar workers are those working in the service sector, and at lower tiers of organizations. Silver collar workers can be categorized under ILO ISCO-08 Major Groups 4 and 5 (clerical support workers and service and sales workers).

3 Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). Labour Force Survey 2024. Dhaka: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh. Available at: <https://bbs.gov.bd/pages/static-pages/6922ddd1933eb65569e166e7>

operating entirely in Bangla intentionally catered towards low-income jobseekers without laptops or desktop devices.

Shomvob's app for jobseekers allows users to create a digital CV, access upskilling courses and employability training, and apply for suitable roles with just a few clicks. To help solve for job-role mismatches – a theme Shomvob observed after launching the platform – their tech team developed a matching algorithm that analyses a jobseeker's background, qualifications, and location to display roles on the app considered most suited to them. Roles are also filtered by gender suitability, requiring employers to specify upfront whether a position is open to female applicants, making female-relevant opportunities visible and transparent rather than assumed.

Launched in May 2025, Shomvob Academy sits alongside the app as a skills-building resource for jobseekers. Free foundational and low-cost advanced courses in CV creation, interview preparation, workplace communication, and sector-specific training developed with industry partners, are available to any jobseeker. The CV writing course alone has enrolled over 54,000 students<sup>4</sup>. For jobseekers who have never written a formal application or sat through a structured interview, the Academy works towards closing a skills gap that is very present in the market.

For employers, hiring reliable blue- and silver-collar candidates at scale involved slow, fragmented processes and no centralised, verified talent pool to draw from. Shomvob addresses this across four services: job posting, bulk hiring, recruitment management, and HR management solutions, helping employers manage large-scale frontline recruitment through a more structured process rather than relying on fragmented channels. The platform improves candidate-job fit by factoring in each candidate's background, qualifications, location, and suitability, making it easier for employers to reach relevant candidates at scale. For enterprise clients, Shomvob also offers digital solutions that streamline end-to-end HR operations, from recruitment management to payroll and payments. Since inception, the platform has facilitated 21,571 placements across blue- and silver-collar roles across 1,700 registered employers (measured from May 2022 - August 2025).

As of July 2026, Shomvob has over **3 million registered users** and **500,000 monthly active users**, with B2B and B2B2C revenue models that serve both sides of the labour market simultaneously.

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4 Available at: <https://academy.shomvob.com/>



Female jobseekers at a Shomvob training session. Photo by Shomvob.

## BUILDING FOR IMPACT: THE B-BRIDDDHI IRMF JOURNEY

When Shomvob first engaged with the B-Bridddhi programme in 2024, impact measurement was not integrated into their business operations. *“Before IRMF, we tracked operational activities — job applications, shortlists, placements, employer activity — but the key limitation was that we were measuring scale and not measuring depth, including what happened to a jobseeker after they’ve been placed in a role,”* recalls Hamim Fardin Khan, who leads impact initiatives at Shomvob.

Receiving IRMF funding and IMM technical assistance throughout 2024 and 2025 encouraged Shomvob to assess and measure its impact depth. By shifting focus from how many jobseekers were being placed to what actually changed in their lives after placement, Shomvob began confidently measuring the outcomes emanating from its business model rather than outputs alone. Shomvob built its IMM system from the ground up across three IRMF tranches, with each tranche tied to a financial disbursement conditional on producing specific high-quality deliverables.

The first part of IRMF, Tranche 1 (USD 30,000), required the development of a Theory of Change (ToC) and corresponding impact metrics. For Shomvob, this was the first time the management team had formally articulated the impact they were working toward. Now, Shomvob had a formal framework that defined what they were doing, what they were trying to change, and how this change would be measured. Creating the ToC enabled Shomvob to articulate traceable indicators and measurements of impact, helping create a framework that partners could engage with. The Theory of Change has since supported the establishment of partnerships with organisations including the World Bank and UNICEF. *“Developing a theory of change actually helped us a lot in moving forward and concretising our vision into action,”* reflects Hasib Rahman, co-founder of Shomvob.

The ToC was designed across four value drivers: user-friendly digital tools, job readiness support, efficient HR management for employers, and a reliable jobseeker-employer matching service. This activity also encouraged Shomvob to define specific measurable outcomes at each stage, from app downloads and training completion to income improvement and workforce inclusivity. The ToC also included explicit gender targets, for example, setting a 25% female participation threshold for both training programmes and placements.

The second part of IRMF, Tranche 2 (USD 30,000), required Shomvob to collect and report on data against impact metrics linked to its ToC, including pre- and post-placement salary information amongst low-income female jobseekers. The final part of IRMF, Tranche 3 (USD 40,000), then required Shomvob to produce an annual impact report and presentation for both internal learning and external communication. It was the first impact report

Impact Page - <https://shomvob.com/impact>

[Impact Report](#)

### Our Impact at a Glance

Shomvob's advancement in widening access to dignified, inclusive work across Bangladesh.



2M+

Youth Engaged



30K+

Job Placements



20K+

Job Seekers Trained



08+

Districts Covered



367K+

Digital Identity Created

 **Shomvob**  
**IMPACT**  
**REPORT**  
2025

Shomvob had ever produced, which presented a meaningful challenge for the team. Building it meant going through data and jobseeker testimonials the team hadn't previously analysed through an impact lens, and two things stood out.

First, the data revealed a significant gender gap in platform participation. Female participation was considerably lower than male participation in Shomvob's early years. Through the impact measurement process, Shomvob was able to understand this gap, and implement targeted initiatives such as location-based job matching, skill development, targeted outreach, and engagement with gender-inclusive employers.

Second, training feedback from female participants highlighted the need for more practical, outcome-focused support: female trainees expressed a preference for longer, hands-on learning and suggested more women-focused courses. These two insights directly shaped the development of Shomvob Academy and the location-based job filtering tool. Producing the impact report also became the starting point for a dedicated impact subpage on Shomvob's website, as well as the foundation for what is now a planned annual impact reporting cycle.

Despite being a current focal point, the gender dimension of Shomvob's impact did not initially surface intentionally. It emerged from observing patterns in its jobseeker data. Not long after launching operations, a conversation with the Gates Foundation prompted Shomvob to disaggregate its jobseeker data by gender for the first time. What the team uncovered was a 90-10 male-to-female split on their platform. Even accounting for Bangladesh's male-skewed labour force, where women represent 33% of workers nationally, women were significantly underrepresented on Shomvob. That surprising data point became the entry point for everything that followed.

#### THE MOMENT GENDER BECAME A BUSINESS PRIORITY

When the Gates Foundation asked Shomvob for disaggregated data, Hasib and his operations team viewed their platform through a gender lens for the first time. *"Leaving 50% of the population<sup>5</sup> behind will not allow us as a business to move forward,"* Hasib recalls. That conversation triggered a series of targeted interventions that followed: requiring employers to specify whether roles were open to female applicants; developing location-based filtering so women could search for opportunities closer to home; and launching targeted female onboarding campaigns at their in-person training centres. These interventions set the foundation for the gender income metric that would later be formalised during the IRMF journey.

When IRMF concluded, the evidence was tangible: Shomvob had provided employment training to 28,000 jobseekers while placing 2,000 jobseekers into new roles. Amongst the placed female jobseekers, 57% received training from Shomvob. Moreover, the placement rate for trained jobseekers was 7.7%, against 3.7% for untrained individuals, validating that training and placement are interlinked and a valuable part of their operations to channel resources into.

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<sup>5</sup> Hasib Rahman refers here to Bangladesh's overall population, which is approximately 50/50 male to female. World Bank, Population, female (% of total population) - Bangladesh, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POPTOTL.FE.ZS?locations=BD>

## THE IRMF FOLLOW-ON: TARGETED FINANCIAL REWARDS FOR ADDITIONAL GENDER IMPACT

The evidence from IRMF pointed toward something specific: Shomvob's intervention was demonstrably increasing income for low-income women jobseekers trained and placed into new roles on its platform. That outcome became the basis for structuring a follow-on ILF transaction with a steeper gender income target and a direct financial reward tied to achieving it.

This gender income metric included in Shomvob's IRMF follow-on transaction incentivised the enterprise to grow the average monthly incomes of low-income women jobseekers from an 8% baseline to a 15% target over a 10-month measurement period. Shomvob's 8% baseline was already above the counterfactual showing a 5-8% range in average salary increments for blue-collar workers in Bangladesh<sup>6</sup>. This meant that the IRMF follow-on target aimed to nearly double the income improvement that female jobseekers could expect to earn independently without receiving support from Shomvob. And beyond the direct income benefit, other indirect inherent long-term benefits arose: higher earning power helps improve a woman's ability to negotiate with future employers, while the new skills they gain help create a more skilled and productive set of workers on its platform, which leads to Shomvob increasingly becoming the go-to hiring partner for Bangladesh employers over time.

The IRMF follow-on payment structure was tied to impact performance thresholds: below 8% triggered no financial disbursement, between 8% and 13% triggered partial payments, and results above 13% unlocked the full USD 54,100 base disbursement. An additional USD 10,900 "impact kicker" for overperformance was available should Shomvob achieve results that exceeded the 15% target by a meaningful margin.

After the measurement period concluded, Shomvob managed to reach 17.36%, successfully surpassing both the base and impact kicker thresholds. This 17.36% income improvement was the result of training and placing a total of 718 low-income women into new job opportunities against a projected minimum of 800 at the outset of the measurement period. Overall, this strong performance led to Shomvob earning a total disbursement of USD 65,000, which was the maximum amount available. This result was enabled by the impact measurement and operational infrastructure IRMF had helped Shomvob build. It was also the product of how Shomvob's relationship with employers had evolved during the programme.

### STORY FROM THE FIELD: THE FACTORY THAT CHANGED ITS MIND ABOUT HIRING WOMEN

When Shomvob first approached one of Bangladesh's largest electronics manufacturers in January 2025 about hiring female workers, the company's management team was sceptical. Their factory location was isolated, the work was physically demanding, and the factory had never employed women before. Shomvob started with an initial placement of 45 female workers. Over time, the factory's management began noticing that female workers were more attentive, took fewer unscheduled breaks, and had lower turnover than their male colleagues. While a small number of female workers found it challenging to adapt to operating heavy machinery, overall employer feedback was positive – the company expressed satisfaction with the recruitment process and the performance and retention of the female workers hired through Shomvob. This positive experience has led to explicit requests from the employers for female candidates. Initial employer hesitation that once made female hiring harder has since become a success story Shomvob now uses to open doors at other factories.

6 Government of Bangladesh, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Bangladesh Gazette, 5 January 2025. Available at: [www.dpp.gov.bd/upload\\_file/gazettes/56617\\_10421.pdf](http://www.dpp.gov.bd/upload_file/gazettes/56617_10421.pdf)

## WHAT THE NUMBERS SHOW

The income metric measured the percentage increase between a low-income female jobseeker's previous salary (before using Shomvob) and their salary after being trained and hired to an employer on Shomvob's platform. All previous salary data was based on self-reported income information collected by Shomvob, whereas the post-employment data came directly through employer partnerships. Before the contract began, Shomvob was able to achieve an average monthly income improvement of 8% — from USD 91.87 pre-placement to USD 99.22 post-placement — which was used to set the baseline figure for the transaction. However, during the contract measurement period, average monthly salaries pre-Shomvob rose amongst the targeted jobseekers from USD 102.18 to USD 119.91 post-employment — a 17.36% improvement, exceeding the 15% target.

Two mechanisms drove that result, enabled by Shomvob's targeted approach made possible through the initial IRMF.

The first mechanism was skill-gap matching across industry tiers. IRMF provided Shomvob with the tools to understand not just how many women jobseekers were being placed into employment via its platform, but also which industries, skill gaps, and training interventions helped lead to the best income outcomes. For instance, in Bangladesh's Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector, Shomvob identified a two-tier structure: local call centres employing first-time jobseekers at minimum wage and multinational companies paying significantly higher wages but requiring demonstrated experience. By placing women into entry-level roles, tracking their performance, and then helping to match them upward to higher-paying multinational roles after they obtain six to twelve months of experience, Shomvob turned initial placements into a ladder of longer-term income growth.

The second mechanism was post-placement follow-ups with female workers. Once a placement is confirmed and recorded in Shomvob's system, the operations team conducts follow-ups through monthly phone-based check-ins to collect pre- and post-placement salary information, and through in-person discussions during Shomvob's activation programmes at institutions or workplaces where workers have been placed. The team also monitors whether the worker remains in the role and documents changes in employment status or salary over time. While workers placed into new opportunities by Shomvob who received salary increments or promotions during the measurement period drove overall metric performance, this was only visible because the IMM tracking infrastructure existed. Before IRMF, Shomvob lacked a systematic process for following up with placed workers.

*Skill based training for female jobseekers. Photo by Shomvob.*



## STORY FROM THE FIELD: THE TRADE-OFF SHOMVOB DIDN'T EXPECT

Post-placement tracking surfaced a finding that Shomvob had not expected. A segment of female jobseekers was actively choosing roles with lower salaries. Upon further examination, Shomvob found that these roles were closer to the women's homes, and working nearby reduced transport costs, saved commute time and freed up time for family responsibilities. *"Even if they're taking a 10%, 15%, 20% hit in terms of salary, they'll be saving somehow,"* reflects Hasib Rahman. For these women, the economic benefit was real even when the salary number did not show it. The insight directly shaped Shomvob's location-based job filtering tool, which now allows jobseekers to search for roles within a defined distance from home.

Zooming out beyond this IRMF follow-on transaction to the entire platform, the shift was equally visible, with the women's share of total placements into new roles growing from 23% to 45% during the measurement period (comparing August 2023 to July 2024 with August 2024 to July 2025). During the same period, female placements increased by 467% year-on-year, against 105% for men. It is worth noting that this platform-level trajectory was shaped by multiple concurrent initiatives, including targeted training and placement activities undertaken as part of a Gates Foundation project focused on increasing women's participation in employment. Together, these efforts gave Shomvob a precise understanding of which levers to pull — which industries, which skill gaps, which training interventions — to help drive income growth for underserved jobseekers they are now being financially rewarded for.

## POST-IRMF WAY FORWARD

Shomvob's five-year ambition is to normalise female participation in sectors where it is currently near-zero, such as retail, logistics, and field sales. Whereas these sectors are broadly gender-balanced in more developed labour markets, a female salesperson in retail or a female delivery rider is almost unheard of in Bangladesh. Shomvob sees this gap not as a constraint, but as an untapped market opportunity, one they can address through their targeted intervention model that has already proved effective in the BPO and manufacturing sectors. As employers in these sectors begin to recognise the retention and performance benefits of gender-diverse teams, the demand for female candidates is growing. Shomvob is well placed to meet this demand as evidenced by their placement track record.

*"Developing a theory of change actually helped us a lot in moving forward and concretising our vision into action. The IRMF journey has changed how we operate and communicate. We have incorporated gender in every communication that we send out."*

HASIB RAHMAN, CO-FOUNDER OF SHOMVOB



Two product investments are already underway to leverage this opportunity and continue supporting female jobseekers. Shomvob Academy, which was launched after discovering through IRMF that trained jobseekers were placed at twice the rate of untrained ones, is developing job-specific courses like “Call Center 101,” co-developed with industry partners to ensure employer relevance. Additionally, a location-based job filtering tool is currently being refined, allowing jobseekers to search for roles within a defined distance from their houses. This was a direct product response built around the insight surfaced through post-placement tracking.

Lastly, the IRMF process also permanently changed how Shomvob communicates. Gender-disaggregated data now features in every board meeting, every investor newsletter, and every pitch to global clients with a diversity and inclusion mandate. “*We have incorporated gender in every communication that we send out,*” says Hasib Rahman. For Shomvob, it’s clear that impact measurement is no longer only a reporting obligation, but also how the business makes decisions to help scale both commercial and impact performance.



*Do you want to access a similar Impact Measurement and Management support? Please contact us via [info@sie-b.org](mailto:info@sie-b.org)*



Outreach event for jobseeker. Photo by Shomvob.



