

## **Sustainability with The Blind Education and Rehabilitation Development Organization.**

The Advocacy Project In Barisal, Bangladesh

### **Background:**

Bangladesh is the size of Iowa and hosts half the population as the entire United States. Most of its inhabitants have little to no access to education, employment, medical facilities, or their fundamental rights. Bangladesh has 8.5 million people who are physically disabled. Those who are disabled depend upon their families and are considered a burden on society by their communities. Until recently there were little opportunities for the disabled to do anything other than depend on their families, but BERDO is working to develop microcredit models that allow the disabled community a means to contribute economically. An example of this is the man who sells me tea every morning. He is blind, BERDO provided him with the space and resources to get started and now he is operating independently of BERDO!

### **Project Description:**

My time working in Dhaka, Bangladesh began June 5<sup>th</sup> of 2012 and will continue for 10 weeks. I will be working with BERDO, researching and implementing programs that allow for sustainable food systems and a vibrant local economy. The core goal of my project is to address the impacts of the western economic model in the eastern world and to research and implement an economic model that allows for individuals to be self-sustaining in a way that is harmonious with the environment. My research will be used to enhance and develop new educational, empowerment, and sustainable development programs.

I will address the effectiveness of BERDO's current programming and document its benefactors. My work will help BERDO develop an operations model that contributes to their current objectives and strengthens the long-term vision of the organization. I am participating in this project because of its commitment to apply theory in the practical world. I look forward to my research being tried and tested and I am eager to learn what my failed applied research has to teach me.

When I leave BERDO I will have contributed to the development of its programming as well as assisted with the mentoring of several microcredit projects. Not only will I continue advocating for BERDO, but will strive to further awareness of the issues and develop a social media following. More information about BERDO can be found at <http://www.berdo-bd.org/>.