

DRIVING THE SOCIAL BUSINESS MODEL IN BANGLADESH

JMD

Most people in the world are familiar with Muhammad Yunus, Nobel Peace Prize Winner and creator of microcredit. It was Yunus's Grameen Bank, which pioneered the social business movement based on the belief that business should be for the benefit of people, particularly in underprivileged societies, not just for the maximization of profit.

What many people may not be aware of, however, is that Muhammad Yunus's Grameen Group has entered a joint venture with Danone to produce a fortified yogurt that provides nutrition to malnourished kids across Bangladesh. This yoghurt is called "Shakti+" – the word Shakti meaning "Energy" in English, and is targeted at the lower SEC of Bangladeshis. Grameen Danone operates on the social business model – in other words, it is a not-for-profit entity, which exists for the benefit of the underprivileged. It is not a charity, and in all aspects other than profit maximization, the business model is as rigorous as for any other for-profit company.

Which is where TBWA\Bangladesh comes in.

We have been working with the Grameen Group as we would with any other FMCG client. Analyzing the competition, defining Disruptive communication strategies, employing media arts and smart communications planning in order to "sell" the product to the target audience. For example, we recommended that in addition to the retail channel, we should employ sales ladies distributing direct to consumer in rural areas. Built into this effort was the need to communicate the social business model to consumers and the fact that there is a social cause integrated with the product itself.

In 2009, TBWA\Benchmark launched a TV and Activation campaign using Muhammad Yunus – who enjoys rock star status in Bangladesh – to endorse the brand and the relevance of the social business model. Sales exceeded all expectations, rising from the stretch target of 100 tons to 107.4 tons – and was particularly strong in rural areas through direct sales.

More importantly for the future, exceeding 100 tons has given Grameen Danone the critical mass to expand from 1 plant (currently) to 50 across the entire country, thus providing jobs and income for people who would otherwise have none.

Our inspiring CEO in Bangladesh, Ashraf Kaiser commented: *"We spend our entire lives helping companies sell more products to make more money. It's energizing to apply the same skills of Disruption and Media Arts to make a difference. And not just through pro bono work, but by the enhancement of an entirely new social business model."*

[Click here](#) to watch the TV spot.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ashraf Kaiser".