Innovative Solutions to Support the Poor and Bridge Digital Divide: 10 Lessons from the Trenches

Anir Chowdhury
Policy Advisor, Access to Information (a2i)
Prime Minister’s Office
May 26, 2016
Bangladesh Context: ‘Glass Half Empty’

- **Demography**
  - Income: $1,300+ GDP per capita, 23%+ under $2/day
  - Literacy: 65% Bangla (English insignificant)
  - Electricity: 75% grid, still unreliable! Largest solar home system

- **Service delivery**
  - Not need responsive, complicated/fragmented
  - Male biased
  - Endemic corruption and ‘rent-seeking’
  - Client-patron relationship
‘Glass Half Full’:
Business as Usual → Leapfrogging

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>0.4%, $1125/Mbps</td>
<td>35% (88 times), $8/Mbps (140 times)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>20 million</td>
<td>130 million (6.5 times)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
<td>20+ million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-Services</td>
<td>Handful</td>
<td>200+ in major dev sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Access Points</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>5,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Unoperational</td>
<td>Policies: ICT, Broadband, Edu, Health,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Agriculture

200,000 Sugarcane Farmers Saved from being Cheated out of Fair Price

Before:
- Time: 10 Days
- Cost: BDT 772
- Visit: 6 Times

After:
- Time: 0 Days
- Cost: BDT 85
- Visit: 1 Time

*before* | *After*
1.5 Million Pregnant Women Received Health Alerts
3 Million Students Saved Time and Money

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time (Day)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost (BDT)</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taka 8.5 Billion Saved in 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shahjalal Univ.</td>
<td>1:3.12</td>
<td>1:1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khulna Univ.</td>
<td>1:2.46</td>
<td>1:1.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applications by women rose from 25% to 33% of total applications
Small Prototype to Massive Upscaling: Service Decentralization through PPP

- Birth and death registration
- Land records
- Exam results
- Government forms
- Financial inclusion (inclusive banking, insurance, payments for services, etc.)

5,300 Digital Centres in LGIs
8,500 more in Post Offices
25,000+ entrepreneurs
100+ services
Whole-of-government under One Umbrella

43,000 offices
70,000 officers
7,000 entrepreneurs
Universities
Companies
178 services
500+ svc processes
1,500+ forms
120,000+ Teachers Learning from Each Other
Creating Foundation for 21st Century Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>অংশাবদ্ধ</th>
<th>বাংলা</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>পরিভাষিত</th>
<th>সহস্রাব্দ</th>
<th>মাধ্যমিক শিক্ষা</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>শিক্ষক বাতায়ন</td>
<td>বাংলা এসফিন্নি</td>
<td>Hello</td>
<td>তাত্ত্বিকভাবে</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>সহস্রাব্দ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Financial Inclusion Demonstrating Massive Time, Cost, Visit (TCV) Reduction

**1. Mobile Banking**
- **Before**:
  - Average time: 3.3 days
  - Average cost: BDT 0.6
  - Number of visits: 0

- **After**:
  - Average time: 1.3 days
  - Average cost: BDT 0.5
  - Number of visits: 1

- **Reduction**: 82%, 65%, 0%

**2. G2P: Salary Payment**
- **Before**:
  - Average time: 180 minutes
  - Average cost: BDT 136
  - Number of visits: 2

- **After**:
  - Average time: 40 minutes
  - Average cost: BDT 65
  - Number of visits: 1

- **Reduction**: 78%, 52%, 50%

**3. P2G: Electricity Bill Payment**
- **Before**:
  - Average time: 4.31 days
  - Average cost: BDT 0.34
  - Number of visits: 4

- **After**:
  - Average time: 1.2 days
  - Average cost: BDT 0.22
  - Number of visits: 1

- **Reduction**: 92%, 76%, 17%

**4. P2G: Fee Payment for Electronic Land Records**
- **Before**:
  - Average time: 138 minutes
  - Average cost: BDT 212
  - Number of visits: 3

- **After**:
  - Average time: 51 minutes
  - Average cost: BDT 136
  - Number of visits: 1

- **Reduction**: 63%, 75%, 75%
Cost Savings Study for 23 e-Services since 2010

• Services
  23

• Beneficiaries
  107 million

• Cost savings
  USD 552 million
Building ‘Civil Registry+’ and Integrated Service Delivery Platforms To Break Silos Across Govt.
Worldwide Partnerships
Lessons From Building A Culture of Innovation
Lesson 1 – “Nudge & Nurture” to Create Small Disruptions

‘Empathy’ training: more unlearning than learning
Free Healthcare & Health Record Management for Ultra Poor Leading to Health Insurance

- **Problem:** Poor always at the end of queue, most often not getting service
- **Solution:** Priority free health card for ultra poor through health card. Electronic database of beneficiaries
- **Up-scaling:** Adopted by Ministry and may form the foundation for Health insurance and achieve SDG UHC

Bottom-up ‘nudge’ can seed large change
Lesson 2 – Policy Imperatives: Annual Performance Agreement – Simplification before Digitization

- 350K retirees
- Cost/retiree: $57 → $17
- National savings: $14 million

Top-down push is needed for large-scale adoption
Lesson 3 – Competition: Increase Transparency, Accountability & Effectiveness through Dashboards

Nobody wants to be in the bottom 10!
Lesson 4 – Collaboration: Lower Cost and Increase Ownership through Crowdsourcing

Cost is 5-10%. Ownership of self-produced content is naturally higher.
Lesson 5 – Encourage Failures for Breakthrough Thinking: Service Innovation Fund

Farmer’s Window helping agri extension workers more quickly & accurately diagnose crop diseases through pictures.

Locally Created low-cost 3D Printer printing prosthetic limbs. Eva picking up something first time.
Lesson 6 – Showcasing: Digital Innovation Fairs in all 64 Districts

- Organized by District Head in collaboration with PMO and Cabinet Office
- 30+ innovation stalls, 20K visitors / district
- District Innovation Awards to civil servants, students and private sector

‘Bragging rights’. Talent search. Awarding innovation
Lesson 7 – Recognition and Reward: Innovation Awards for Performance and Innovation

Digital Centre of The Year (2011)

Woman entrepreneur of Borohor UISC, Sirajganj District

National level recognition from highest authority encourages innovation
Lesson 8 – Engagement with Citizens for Service Transformation

Over **0.5 million** citizens engaged through **875+ FB pages**

Unprecedented public accountability and interaction with citizens
Lesson 9 – Extensive Partnerships: Create Multiplier Effect

Learning from other people’s mistakes is ‘cheaper’. No need to reinvent the wheel. Better resource mobilization. Wider ownership.
Lesson 10 – Be Unreasonable

“The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man.” — George Bernard Shaw

**Reasonable Approach:**
1. Follow models of the ICT-rich nations

**Unreasonable Approach:**
1. Don’t follow anybody
2. Identify own development problems
3. Learn from developing ‘ICT-learning nations’ and developed ‘ICT-rich nations’
4. Design/co-design development innovations
5. Support field level innovators