

Voices

FROM THE FIELD

Sayedul Arefin

Senior Program Manager, JICA Bangladesh Office



Sayedul Arefin was originally a journalist, not a development assistance specialist. After earning his master's degree from the University of Dhaka, he went to work at a Bengali daily newspaper. "I was given charge of the weekly page on agricultural and educational development. This made me interested in contributing to the development of Bangladesh through JICA."

Sayedul has handled a wide range of work for the JICA Bangladesh Office during his more than 25 years there, in assignments with the Agriculture and Rural Development and Private Sector Development sections, as well as the Volunteer Section, where he is currently assigned. His years of hard work won him the JICA President Award in 2013.

He is both happy and humble. "This has been a wonderful recognition, but the credit is not only for me. Forty years of JICA Bangladesh Office teamwork contributed to this award. It represents everything we have achieved through true partnership between Japan and Bangladesh."

While he is proud of all the work he has done with JICA, Sayedul names a few areas that have been particularly vital: "Technical cooperation projects are very important for Bangladesh, as they directly contribute to the country's human resource development." He also notes that Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers—who marked their 40th year of activity in Bangladesh last year—contribute greatly in fields like schooling, health education, and disease control.

The hard-working Sayedul sees plenty of room for further development. "With a huge population, Bangladesh needs to create employment opportunities to tap this resource. We're a small country with little cultivable land; we need vigorous industrial development through foreign direct investment."

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