

Graham Jones

Tonya Funding Report

Grameen Bank

The Bangladesh Experience

Over the past year at Sewanee, I have taken two courses in which I have studied the Grameen Bank in great detail. However, no course could have prepared me for extraordinary experiences I gained in my trip to Bangladesh through the Grameen Bank. The Grameen Bank and Dr. Muhammad Yunus are known around the world for founding microfinance and having made enormous contributions to the global fight against poverty. Physically witnessing the empowerment of the poor in the villages of Bangladesh certainly has been a life changing experience. I will undoubtedly cherish these memories forever, and I will strive to continue making a positive contribution to social needs in whatever jobs I may have in the future.

While with the Grameen Bank I learned about the many levels in the structure of the bank, including the zonal offices, area offices, branch offices, and the head office. We also worked with the many sister companies of the Grameen Bank, such as: Grameen Kalyan, Grameen Shakti, Grameen Danone, Grameen Knitwear, and the Grameen nursing school. While the Grameen Bank almost exclusively offers monetary help to the poor, its sister companies offer a variety of services including yogurt, solar power, clothing, and health care. Lastly, but indeed the most rewarding part of my internship were the days I was able to spend in the branch office. I stayed with a branch manager and his family in the local Grameen branch and visited multiple centers daily and had the opportunity to speak with many of the poor, (mostly women) borrowers, whose lives had clearly been empowered through the Grameen Bank.