

The case studies are collected in a life history method whereby the trainees discuss their life choices and why they have made these choices. It is a common qualitative research method to understand an individual's current attitudes and behaviours and how they may have been influenced by initial decisions made at another time and in another place. B-SkillFUL adopts this method to explore everyday lives of people involved with the interventions and how it is supporting them to achieve their life goals towards wellbeing.

## CASE STUDY 1 – MD. MORSALIN

**DISTRICT:** BOGRA

### Background

Morsalin is an 18 years old boy who cannot hear or speak. His mother explains that she is burdened with 2 children with the same impairment – speech and hearing. He was enrolled in a local school and learned to read and write a bit. However, his mother said that teachers were struggling to teach him in class. Thus, after studying till class 5 he dropped out and used to remain depressed. Days went by when his mother tried to find a suitable school for him. But she did not have enough money to put him into the special needs school. It was also far from where she lived.



### Training changed his life

Morsalin enrolled in the training with a hope to get to do something with his life. When his neighbour came and told his mother that the B-SkillFUL training is facilitated through TMSS, where Differently Able People (DAPs) can also enrol, his mother was very pleased. She brought Morsalin to the training centre and during pre-counselling sessions it was decided that he can be eligible for Mobile Phone Servicing. Luckily the instructor knew how to speak in sign language and could communicate with Morsalin very well. According to Morsalin's mother, the instructor was extremely helpful in motivating and teaching Morsalin how to use techniques of mobile phone servicing. Morsalin's instructor mentioned how intuitive he is and how fast he was in learning.

### Job and beyond

The owner of the shop Milon Hossain was sensitised by the TSP staff to hire Morsalin as a worker. The owner also participated in the Labour Rights and Decent Work (LRDW) workshop to be sensitised in creating a better environment for his workers.

After working with him for a few months, the owner is convinced that Morsalin will be able to work for him. Currently Morsalin earns about BDT 5,000 per month and is a trusted employee. Morsalin has been working in this mobile phone servicing centre for almost 12 months now.

Morsalin's mother knows how bright her son is and is confident that such 'push' will enable him to move forward in life. But she is also concerned about his future in this society. She says, *'Most people are not friendly with him and more focus should be given to sensitise the community. Morsalin is a very smart boy, he was able to study in regular schools until class five but then he dropped out because of society's outlook on him. With the right support, he will go a long way.'*

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## CASE STUDY 2 – MST. MORZIA BEGUM

DISTRICT: JOYPURHAT

### Background

Mst. Morzina Begum is a mother of 2 and is the only breadwinner of her family. Her mother is ill and stays with her. Morzina's husband used to be a rickshaw puller. But lately he has been diagnosed with kidney problems and cannot go to work as he is under medication. Both of his kidneys have been damaged and the family earning is not sufficient for the surgery he requires.

### Daily struggle

She received training on tailoring from I.D.A. Computer Training Center in Joypurhat under B-SkillFUL project and is working as a home-based tailor. While attending the Workplace based Training, she faced social barriers as her neighbours raised concerns about her frequent movement outside the home and late return due to work load. It became more complicated when she did not stop working. Even though her husband did not have any reservation that she worked outside, he requested her to work from home to avoid this kind of social reservations. As she did not want to live in constant struggle with the society, she bought a sewing



machine with her savings in a local micro finance institute. With this fund she established her home-based business. She also expressed that, it is very convenient for her to work from home as she has to take care of her husband and mother, along with her two children. She said,

*'If I would not have received the training, I could not have been able to run my family. My children would starve.'*

### Booming Business

As Morzina stays near a school, most of the orders for the business comes from the local school to produce uniforms for the students. Additionally, neighbours now come to her for making dresses and other necessary clothing. Usually, she earns BDT 5,000 in a month. During any festival season, her income increases up to BDT 6,000 or more. She works 7-8 hours daily and maintains household chores simultaneously. Her daughter and mother assist her in this.

### Future Plans

Morzina aspires to buy assets for her family but with the little monthly income it seems quite unreal. She is very stressed about her husband's treatment and often falls unwell. Amid such enormous hurdles, she longs for a better future for her children and works hard so that they can continue their studies.

## CASE STUDY 3– Mst SHIMU AKHTER

DISTRICT: TANGAIL

### Background

Mst Shimu Akhter is a confident young entrepreneur in Tangail now. She has come a long way. She is a single 18-year-old woman but could only manage to continue her studies up to grade 8 due to financial insolvency. She is the daughter of a farmer with 3 younger sisters at home. Her father was the sole breadwinner of the family while she used to help her mother with household chores before she became an entrepreneur.

### Becoming a Mobile Phone Technician

Shimu lives very close to the BGS Training Centre, from which she received training on Mobile Phone Servicing. She got to know about the training from previous trainees and was very keen to learn this skill. Although there were only 3 females out of 20 in her class, the training went smoothly and the instructors were very cooperative. After the training, she shared with her instructors the dream to start her own business. As such, BGS nominated her for participating in an additional Entrepreneurship Development Training, also facilitated by B-SkillFUL. Through this training, she became



aware of the do's and don'ts of running a business. Following this training, she pursued her desire to become an entrepreneur. She received a loan of BDT 50,000 through the help of BGS and they have also helped her find a business partner in the local market place. Her partner has contributed his own money in the business and they are currently operating the shop together. However, she shared her struggles due to being engaged in a technical occupation, which is usually considered as a job for men.

### Struggles of a female Entrepreneur

Shimu considers herself extremely fortunate to find a business partner who is very cooperative and understanding. She does not feel unsafe to work with him in the marketplace. Currently, they do not have any employee appointed to support them but she aspires to expand her business once they start making profits. She, however, says that she is the only female who runs a business in that area. It is not a very comfortable place for women to spend the whole day. She cannot go to the washroom for hours, as there is none for women in the market place. Luckily, her shop is within 10 minutes walking distance of BGS and she gets to use their washroom. Nevertheless, it is not too convenient to go there every time. As such, there are days when Shimu spends as long as 8 hours without using the washroom. She says, *"If my training institute was further away, I would probably not be able to continue doing business in the market place."*

Additionally, most of her clients are usually males, who are not comfortable with the fact that the technician is a female. They think it is a man's job but once they receive good service from her, they become compelled to change their perspective. On the other hand, Shimu and her family also have to undergo much social pressure not only because she is engaged in a male oriented occupation, but also because she works at a marketplace as a business partner with another man. She expressed *"My parents and I have to deal with taunts and harassment from my neighbours and people in my society every day because I have chosen an occupation which is considered to be male dominated. On top of that, I have chosen to do business with a male partner in the market place so people think I have lost my mind."* Disregarding these impediments, Shimu is determined to continue being one of the breadwinners in her family with the anticipation that she can be an inspiration to many others. She also aspires to continue and expand her business further, even after getting married. She says she will try her best to convince her husband and in-laws in this regard.