Elevator Pitch
Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Technology can be so intriguingly beautiful that it can evolve the lives it touches. A click can take you the information highway; known as the internet, it has changed the way we think, we communicate and how we do business. Imagine Marco carrying the best of Europe’s consumerism on the Silk Road and carrying it all the way China and back. In the 21st century the internet is the silk route of the world – connecting every corner and possibly even space. What this has done is quite the implausible – it even transgresses the reach of religions-breaking down barriers, veils; unwinding culture, history, language and anything there is you can imagine. It even hosts parallel worlds where you set your own rules and be yourself, other than yourself in reality.

It is hard to imagine a backward country such as Bangladesh ‘internetized’, where the ‘I’ of infrastructure seems to be wandering away into the vast invisibility of red tapes of ignorant empty chairs. Chairs we elect but selectively they conjure against the countless vote castes pertaining to their ignorance and self acclaimed intellectual degrees of self satisfying wealth. But that did not stop us from dreaming, And we a young team namely Ataur Rahman,Sadequa Hassan Sejuti ,Nurur Rahman and shari quantitative Hassan started an idea into reality naming “MY Country MY village”.

(My Country MY village) is the first project of its kind that takes computers and web access to the lowest income group and empowers them with a possibility that was not ever previously available to them before. This project is the real possibility of a Digital Bangladesh, where digital technology reaches out to the furthest corners of our country bringing change to countless lives. Our Service centers around an establishment called the rural E-Center which generates local employment as well as self-employment opportunities through E-Commerce. Our holistic approach in developing communities has 3 main programs of operation.

1. The online Rural market, Website link: www.amardesheshop.com
2. The Computer literacy program 

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Employment Generation through E-commerce
Women are often relegated to vulnerable forms of employment. Our ICT Based Platforms “MY COUNTRY MY VILLAGE” creates an opportunity especially women to access the market even sitting and working at their home. In rural societies, women are still not allowed to work outside their homes in most of the cases. But with proper training and guidelines and with an easy access to markets these women could have done much more in contributing to the economic development of their family and welfare of their children as most of them are found to be skilled in needlework or other forms of handiworks. In two level one employed by the e-center another self employed.

E-center employees (Employed): ?-9 individuals in rural area will be employed by each e-centre. There are no gender hierarchy present during recruitment. In the fact the e-centre employs 3 women and 4 men. It means once 64 e-centres achieved there would be 448-576 employees as total. A crash course training is provided free of cost to new employees.

Producers (Self Employed) People who are using e-centres, and in particular women who are trading on( www.amardesheshop.com ), report that the ability to work at home and generate income through direct sales is extremely empowering. For many women the only option to contribute to household income is to move to Dhaka to work in the RMG sector, or a similar job away from their homes and communities. My Country My Village is successfully giving women an alternative choice which is better for them and their families. Today, work-at-home conditions are enabling women to sell their, Hand crafted goods such as “NokshiKatha”, Handlooms, Handicrafts, Agricultural products all over Bangladesh and...
even abroad! For example over 2250 women from nearby villages registered themselves with the e-center, all of them skilled in needlework. For the first time women of those villages are earning through what they thought was only a hobby!

All Manufacturers has Individual shop with all their details, so that customers can know whom they are buying from and giving them their fair price.

Farmers: Farmers, who were previously left with no choice but to rely wholeheartedly on middlemen, now can be emancipated from this culture of dependency on the wholesalers and take control of their own business. By registering themselves at the e-centres and cataloguing all their vegetables, they can now sell their produce directly to the buyers. The e-center marketing team can offer them advice on how to best package their products in order to increase their value to the customers. We have created individual farmers shop with his own details

2) The Computer literacy program

The program is independently contributing to rural youth development through various computer training programs. Aimed for self-employment boosting entrepreneur skills by overcoming the barrier of the rural-urban digital divide.

Our training has been categorized into 4 parts
1. School students (primary) admission fee at BDT 50 only and the training is free. Duration of the course is 2 months.
2. School student’s secondary admission fee is BDT 50 only and training is free. Duration of the course is 2 months.
3. Commercial training at BDT 400 per month, courses have been divided into 3 months and 6 months.
4. Women get free training giving admission fee that is BDT 50 for 2 months intensive training.


E-DESH Country Web Portal www.enedesh.org

Electronic Desh (E-Desh) is a web-based platform to provide a centralized and well organized point of information storage and sharing for villages of Bangladesh. It’s the one stop access point for Government portal, rural yellow pages, Tourism portals, Education portals, Art and cultural pages, rural news online among the others. E-Desh aims to connect the entire nation by bringing together people from the lowest regional level of the country in a common platform by connecting them to a single network. Edesh facilitates exploring opportunities with new features and services in time.

www.emongla.com is an example in the year 2010, 16th April inaugurated by a Grand Digital Fair of Bangladesh first Digital upazilla Digital Mongla. by Arch. Yeafes Osman, Honorable Minister of ICT, Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh. We covered 10 schools and colleges, Mukjodha porishod, Local Government, Mongla upazilla porishod, Tourism, Mongla Port, Mongla Press club, 1150 entrepreneurs with their individual shop and 13000 community members involve to ADAG. The whole activities were done by the e-center based at the local regions by the local youth from one center.

My Country My Village is the spearhead project and Tech support given by FSB(Future Solution for Business) ltd.

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

The project has taken computers and web access to the lowest income groups in the remote villages and it has met with the success of empowering them with better economic opportunities through better market access. The project create and facilitate a new set of entrepreneurs in the rural area and specifically opened up employment opportunities for women in rural areas. The project is getting more acceptance over the period as the Project website has seen 2764196 hits request till April 2011 till 31st December 2011 and 29% increase in traffic (per month) from December 2010 to the month July 2011 and till date, the Amar Desh website has made the sales worth 9, 50, 000 taka. The initiative in the long run, would be able to bridge the digital divide and would be able to take the technology to its end users. All our projects are totally funded by ourselves so far as donation to try to change the lives of other less fortunate. It is no enough just to develop projects to achieve MDG, rather it is important to fully become a part of it in every possible way, and to really care about achieving the MDG’s. Presently have established 7 centers and we have more than 5500 entrepreneurs. From each center we are serving local communities school and colleges providing websites and softwares build by the local e-center by the local youth, 834 above students being trained from our ICT base computer training. 84000 local community people are served from 7 centers. Due to lack of fund and infrastructure support we are not able to scale up this project but if we can make more 64 centers in 64 in 64 districts of our country with in a year We can serve Entrepreneurs 50305 Local youth trained 7620 Community members served 768000.

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

E-commerce have been implemented so many times, so many countries but it is very rare and in our country we are the pioneer to take e-commerce to mass people. E-commerce was always for a lifestyle example NBR(non residential Bangladeshi) who are living aboard would send flowers or gift to the loved one or families on occasion but we are the pioneer to start e-commerce in a different level for mass people and for the underprivileged people. In a country like Bangladesh, just introducing e-trade or popularizing the concept is innovative on its own. On top of this we are taking the technology to the masses of people in the rural areas to enable them to do e-trade. E-trade assists in reducing the transaction costs and also connects local SME’s to markets in the urban areas (Dhaka) as well as different rural markets across the country, and hence facilitating the whole business process. Travelling costs are reduced and in some instances are non-existent. E Trading creates a means of self-employment which reduces the rural-urban migration rate. It never happened in Bangladesh retailer Customers buying directly from the producers 1000 miles away. Same way a producers gets his money before delivering his goods. Technology makes it possible and e-commerce is the only solution. We are making both rural and urban collaboration www.bangladeshbrands.com will serve the rural people necessity and www.amardeshshop.com will give all the people both rural and urban a wider market place with cheaper price and fresh products, without formalin, preservatives and chemicals. www.amardeshshop.com is the only website with physical e centre which other don’t have. This e-center works as a town center for rural community to serve other activities like education, culture, tourist, health, information and etc. Our project has been recognized worldwide by United Nation solving Millennium Development Goals World Summit Youth Award 2011. Also in our bag of accolades are the Manthan award, South Asia 2011 Digital Inclusion for Development in the category of e-business and enterprise.
Won the award from e-asia on the category of best business model and localized application/content from South Asia and won the National Digital Innovation award on e-commerce, Business and Finance, solution into the hands of users or beneficiaries. Based on our observation on our projects, we can extrapolate the approximate number of different professions who will likely benefit from the scale up of the project: 1) More than 20,000 women (1150 women are already registered) will have access to market and sell their handmade products; such as clothes, nokshikatha, bedcovers etc. through e-centres. 2) To date 750 registered farmers across the country in our 6 centres and are selling their products with more fair income through e-centres. At least 15,000 new farmers will have access if we can scale up to 64 locations. 3) 7-9 individuals in rural area will be employed by each e-centre. There are no gender hierarchy present during recruitment. In fact Mongla e-centre employs 3 women and 4 men. It means once 64 e-centres achieved there would be 448-576 employees as total. A crash course training is provided free of cost to new employees. 4) The centre is also responsible for providing ICT training to the local villages at a subsidised rate. Women are given free IT training; the centre at Mongla trains 30 individuals. 5) The centres also act as an information hub in the rural areas, where valuable information can be provided to the locals. 6) The centre also acts as a bazaar, where locals can buy products being offered on the Amar Desh website. Rural sales constituted to approximately 1 lakh BDT. How this project involving low-income people: Our project is benefitting low income people mainly as producers and also as consumers. At this time there are 60-70 customer orders per week mainly from urban areas. Most of the producers registered at e-shops are now earning a higher income than what they used to through the usual value chains. Some groups of producers such as handicraft makers are benefitting from employment for the first time and this too can be said to be the case for some upcoming farmers, who have started their business through our e-commerce medium. The low income bracket benefits as consumers as they themselves have the option of exploring newer cheaper goods through e-commerce. Also in terms of consuming a service, they can browse and be involved in the many helpful and entertaining websites e-Desh has to offer. Finally, employees are directly hired to maintain the e-centres. People who are using e-centres, and in particular women who are trading on www.amardesheshop.com, report that the ability to sell through e-centres is extremely empowering. For many women the only option to contribute to household income is to move to Dhaka to work in the RMG sector, or a similar job away from their homes and communities. Amar Desh is successfully giving women an alternative which is better for them and their families. We are delivering 100% fresh vegetables without preservatives from farmers and they are the guaranteed provider as no middleman are involved. Value can be added to the goods sold in terms of the location. For example, the prototype e-centre at Mongla has good access to renowned items only available in those southern areas/mangrove forests such as tiger prawns and Sundarban honey. The unique selling proposition of our goods is that they are always fresh and also come at a cheaper price than what the current market offers. Each of e-centres has 1-2 persons who are in the position of Quality Controller. Though the centres achieve more sales in cities, they act as virtual malls to both urban and rural areas. This growth of rural to rural marketing is important because it can be the future base for further plans of expansion. Especially, when we consider that one of the aims of Amar Desh e-shop is to curb rural to urban migration, a strong diversified customer as well as supplier base spread all along the 64 districts of Bangladesh. From the customer’s or buyer’s point of view, the people living in the rural areas can have access to a wider catalogue of goods because of e-shop.

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

Imagine a rural village. An ancient manor belonging to a vanished lord and his arcaha room converted to an office with computers and accessories. It serves the centrefold of informational highway gateway. Everyday villagers come with their products –anything they produce even if it is just a gourd and catalogue it on the internet. A boyer from hundreds of miles away glances through the catalogue and puts an order. In less than a day or two days he has received a product which he buys twice or even thrice the money he pays in a city market. Back in the village, the producer has received a fair price and the money has been electronically sent to her bank account. A simple idea bringing together the rural and urban breaking down the syndicate inflammatory charlatans in between and upgrading of the rural classes through a new market created on the information highway. Imagine schools which have their own web pages, where student themselves (under supervision) upload anything and everything starting from their grades to yearly events and benefiting from online connectivity with people of different age groups across the world. Imagine a village adda where fresh water is scarce but people are learning to use internet and make use of ecommerce by themselves through an e-center. Here are some of the stories: Hosne aara Begum has a very typical story. One that is ubiquitous in the developing so called third world. She was an ordinary woman facing ordinary challenges in the remotest villages of Bangladesh. The sole provider of the family, a typical lackadaisical chauvinistic husband, another of three children, a pariah barely making enough to make ends meet. She was often abused by her husband when money was required to send her youngest child to school. Hence the child desire to learn was quickly put to a halt. But what is extraordinary is how her entire life changed after she became part of the Amar Desh Amar Gram e-centre community. She started her journey with Amar Desh Amar Gram as a quality supervisor. Having no previous computer literacy she toiled hard to learn the basics of computer operation. Hosne Ara Begum was soon generating income which was sufficient to send her youngest child to school in Dhaka City. In a short amount of time her desire to break out of the shackles of oppression was realized by the people of her community. She garnered the respect and it went to the extent that people in her community encouraged her to be part local politics in Mithakhali village in Mongla. Did we also mention Hosne Ara Begum is 65 years old? Raimoni- the proud owner of her own e-shop, with tears in her eyes “I could hardly eat twice a day. I am old enough my childrens left me and my community encouraged her to be part local politics in Mithakhali village in Mongla. Did we also mention Hosne Ara Begum is 65 years old?

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palm of my hands. Everyday I face new challenges, overcome them and learn new things. Everyday I gain valuable experience. Now I can see respect glinting in the eyes of the villagers and even have the good fortune of having tea with the honorable headmasters!

### Sustainability

**Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?**

Currently FSB is the only PLC in Bangladesh to be involved in such an inclusive business. This is especially true in the case of e-shop as online transactions in Bangladesh is very rare and only done through by means of international credit cards and in December 2010 Brac Bank launched the e-commerce payment gateway and FSB is providing the the only platform to buy products from both rural and urban. E trading is a very recent phenomenon in this country. However, further competition is welcome as it will lead to the improvement of the quality of our whole service, starting from the goods themselves to the efficiency delivery process. Also more the rise of more business models such as ours will ensure that e-commerce is more widely accepted in Bangladesh, and we can hope to gain from industry benefits. FSB’s e-shop is different from other e-commerce sites like cellBazaar and clickbd in that it is exclusively geared towards selling from the rural centres of the country to elsewhere in the country. Only the producers inhabiting the rural areas can sell through e-shop; making the venture an inclusive one. Virtually anybody has the right to upload in sites like cellBazaar but online payment transaction cannot be made. Another difference is that FSB acts as the third party overlooking each transaction while in the other aforementioned web sites; the buyer and the seller are the only two involved parties. FSB is the only company to have e-centres in the rural areas and their partnerships with transport services means that they are directly responsible for logistics. The current govt. has a mandate to digitalize Bangladesh by 2021 and FSB’s Amar Desh will contribute significantly towards achieving this goal if we scale-up successfully and can solve the MDG’s goal.

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