

BANGLADESH ECONOMY CASHING IN ON OUTSOURCING VENTURES

Sixteen-year old Abdullah would rather be at home on his computer than in class. But unlike most teenagers, he doesn't chat or play games: instead he runs his own outsourcing business designing web applications online for clients based in the Middle-East and in Europe.

I like to work, I like to support my family, and I like to achieve something [of] big in my life.

In a country where most people live on less than 2 dollars a day, he makes 10 dollars an hour, supporting his entire family. When his father passed away, his mother took a loan to buy him a second-hand computer. She had to work day and night as a seamstress to pay it off.

We had no money, it was very hard. But that sacrifice paid off. I wanted to support his ambitions, however big they may be.

Abdullah is part of a growing number of teenagers in Bangladesh who have found work online. The Association of Software Information says there are 15,000 of them. And the numbers are growing.

In a paper-based bureaucracy many officials don't understand what information technology actually is. Only 2% of the population has access to the Internet.

This is mostly an informal economy of people working from home, connecting their wires to the only fiber-optic cable that connects Bangladesh to the rest of the world.

With 65% of the population under the age of 25, the Internet is offering tremendous opportunities for young Bangladeshis like Abdullah, who use it to bring the world at their fingertip.

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