



Australia Awards

Year in Review 2025

Australia Awards
– Bangladesh



Highlights of 2025

In 2025, Australia Awards continued to support Bangladesh's development priorities by equipping emerging leaders with the skills, networks and leadership experience to drive meaningful change.

It was a year of growth for Australia Awards, demonstrating Australia's commitment to building human capability in Bangladesh, with increases in:

- scholars commencing their master's degree-level studies (55, compared to 44 in 2024)
- instances of scholars participating in enrichment opportunities (144, compared to 86 in 2024)
- Bangladeshi participants completing Short Courses (58, compared to three in 2024)
- participants in alumni engagement activities in Bangladesh (692, compared to 283 in 2024).

In total, 305 Australia Awards scholars, fellows, and Short Course and Australian Professional Opportunity (APO) participants from Bangladesh undertook education, training and professional development during 2025.

Forty-five of these scholars completed their degrees at Australia's world-class universities and returned home as alumni, committed to contributing to Bangladesh's development.

A comprehensive schedule of enrichment activities, including six flagship Scholars Symposiums, enhanced Bangladeshi scholars' professional capabilities and facilitated networking with senior Australian leaders. Indigenous engagement was an

important theme throughout the year's activities, giving Bangladeshi scholars the chance to learn about the culture, history and achievements of Australia's First Nations people.

As targeted short-term training opportunities to strengthen sector-specific capability and regional collaboration, Australia Awards also supported 58 Bangladeshis to complete five Short Courses and 102 Bangladeshis to undertake two APOs.

For alumni, Australia Awards provided professional development and networking opportunities in Bangladesh and regionally. A highlight was the 2025 Regional Alumni Workshop in Sri Lanka, which had the theme 'From inclusion to equity: Development for all'. Six Bangladeshis joined other alumni from South Asia and Mongolia at the workshop, which launched the Equity for All alumni network. This fourth regional alumni network (alongside the Regional Women in Leadership Network, Male Allies for Gender Equality alumni network, and Champions for the Environment and Climate Action) enabled participants to continue collaborating on equity-focused initiatives for people with disability and from marginalised communities.

Cover image: Australia Awards scholars from Bangladesh. From left to right: Juliana Shetara, Jayanti Rani Roy, Suravi Rani Sutradhar and Md. Tanvir Alam Himel.

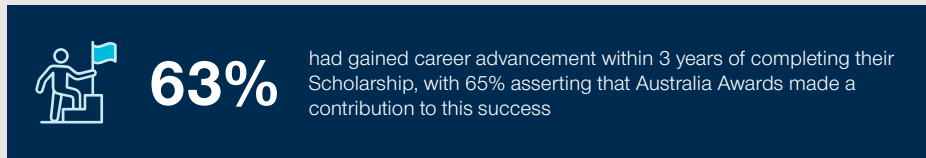
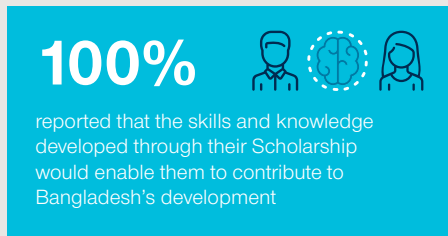
Image: Australia Awards recipients from Bangladesh. From left to right: Shimul Sen, Abida Sultana and Jahid Hasan.



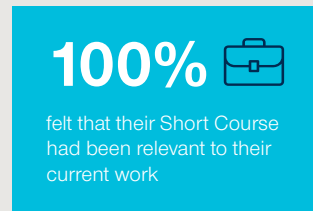
Outcomes at a glance

Outcome: Alumni use their skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development

Among Australia Awards Scholarships alumni in Bangladesh surveyed:



Among Australia Awards Short Course alumni in Bangladesh surveyed:



Outcome: Australia is viewed as a valued international partner

Among Australia Awards Scholarships alumni in Bangladesh surveyed:

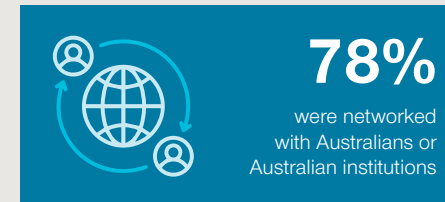


Among Australia Awards Short Course alumni in Bangladesh surveyed:

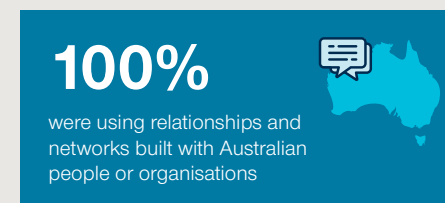


Outcome: Alumni contribute to cooperation between Australia and Bangladesh

Among Australia Awards Scholarships alumni in Bangladesh surveyed:



Among Australia Awards Short Course alumni in Bangladesh surveyed:



“My Australia Awards experience means so much more to me than just earning a degree. The inclusive environment and the support I receive as a scholar with disability make it possible for me to fully participate and grow in ways I hadn’t expected. Living in Australia opened my eyes to new ideas, strengthened my confidence, and connected me with people and experiences that will continue to shape both my work and my community.”

Shah Rahnuma Binte Jalal Sarna
Master of Social Policy
The University of Melbourne
commenced 2025



Australia Awards Scholarships

In 2025, Australia Awards Scholarship recipients from Bangladesh achieved strong academic and professional outcomes. Forty-five Bangladeshis returned home after completing their master’s degrees in 2025 and are now applying their learning in support of Bangladesh’s development priorities.

At the other end of their Scholarship journey, 55 scholars from Bangladesh commenced master’s-level study at Australian universities in 2025. This brought the total number of Bangladeshi scholars studying in Australia in 2025 to 101, which included two people with disability.

To complement scholars’ studies and strengthen their leadership capability, Australia Awards – South Asia & Mongolia offered 23 scholar enrichment opportunities throughout the year, including the flagship Scholars Symposiums (see page 08). Scholars from Bangladesh participated in these opportunities 144 times, engaging in professional development activities such as grants, internships and online communication training.

Consistent with Australia’s policy priorities, enrichment activities strongly emphasised gender equality, Indigenous engagement and equity for people with disability. Key activities included:

- immersive cultural engagement with Indigenous Australians (see page 04)
- an International Women’s Day online seminar with Indigenous women’s advocate Vicky Welgraven AM, facilitated by Bangladeshi scholar Neingmraching Chowdhury Nani

- a World Environment Day seminar with Professor Anne Poelina, highlighting the connection between Indigenous knowledge and environmental management
- *Disability Sector Connect*, a study tour in Adelaide focused on innovation and best practice in disability advocacy and inclusion.

Bangladeshi scholar Sokina Aktar said, “The *Disability Sector Connect* program was an insightful and transformative experience.”

As part of a new initiative, Bangladeshi scholars Md. Sakibur Rahman Bhuiyan, Nahid Nawrin Sultana and Md. Turab Hossain were appointed Scholar Ambassadors. In this role, the three promote scholar enrichment activities, and act as a voice for scholars from South Asia and Mongolia.

Representing Australia’s continued investment in long-term development outcomes, 60 emerging leaders from Bangladesh received Scholarships to commence study in Australia in 2026, an increase on the previous year. This cohort was 50% women and included five people from ethnic minority groups, reflecting Australia’s commitment to equal opportunity for all people, regardless of gender or background.

Scholars engage with Indigenous Australians

In 2025, scholars from Bangladesh participated in Indigenous engagement activities across Australia and online, alongside other Australia Awards scholars from South Asia and Mongolia.



Image: Bangladeshi Australia Awards scholar Shila Roy (Master of Science [Professional], James Cook University, commenced 2025) participating in an Indigenous art workshop.

The flagship Indigenous engagement activity for the year was a four-day First Nations study tour in Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park, South Australia. Through various sessions, scholars learnt about the relationship that the Adnyamathanha people, the Traditional Owners of the area, have with the environment.

Supratic Chakma, a scholar from one of Bangladesh's indigenous groups, said that the activity "broadened my understanding of both Australian and global Indigenous perspectives". He added, "I even tried kangaroo meat for the first time—a unique culinary experience."

In Melbourne, local guides led scholars along the Aboriginal Heritage Walk at Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. The guides shared stories of the land and its people, and pointed out native plants used for food, medicine and tools.

Scholar Shuvra Das said, "The walk offered a meaningful opportunity to explore Aboriginal history and gain a deeper appreciation for traditional knowledge."

In Sydney, scholars travelled to Bundeena Royal National Park, on the traditional lands of the Dharawal people, where they heard cultural stories from a member of the Yuin Nation. Attendees also had hands-on opportunities to learn boomerang throwing and traditional fire-making techniques.

In Adelaide, scholars visited the Living Kurna Cultural Centre and participated in an Aboriginal art class with local Indigenous artist Bryce Cawte, a proud Kurna and Ngarrindjeri man. During the session, Bryce shared stories of the land, emphasising art's role in preserving cultural knowledge, strengthening social bonds and expressing connection to Country.

Scholar Suparna Roy said, "The thoughtful organisation and the welcoming atmosphere of the Living Kurna Cultural Centre truly left a lasting impression."

Scholars also joined Ronnie Jordan, a Pitta Pitta Wangkamahdla woman, and Coen, a Pitta Pitta Wangkamahdla Muruwari Ngemba man, for an online Aboriginal weaving workshop. Using materials received in advance, scholars followed step-by-step instructions to learn coil weaving and rope making, while Ronnie explained how weaving connects the weaver, their ancestors and the land.

Each of these scholar experiences helped participants gain deeper understanding and appreciation of Indigenous Australians' culture, history and achievements.

Short-term training

In 2025, Australia Awards delivered short-term training opportunities to 204 Bangladeshis in priority sectors, including trade, climate change, leadership and Indigenous knowledge. These Short Courses, Fellowships and Australian Professional Opportunities (APOs) strengthened participants' skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to Bangladesh's development.



Image: Bangladeshi participants in the Short Course on Bilateral Trade Negotiations. From left to right: Dr Rahima Khaton, Shammi Islam and Dr Nazneen Kawshar Chowdhury.

A total of 58 Bangladeshis completed Short Courses designed to build sector-specific capability and foster collaboration, all of which involved learning, networking and site visits in Australia, as follows.

Twenty-four Bangladeshi officials completed a Short Course on *Bilateral Trade Negotiations*, developing analytical skills and knowledge related to trade and investment for economic development, with a particular focus on bilateral negotiation.

A further 34 Bangladeshis completed one multi-country Short Course and three Regional Short Courses, enabling engagement with counterparts across the region working in similar fields:

- Twenty-one senior officials from Bangladesh completed a multi-country Short Course on *Executive Leadership*, alongside colleagues from Nepal and Sri Lanka. Participants learnt about Australian Public Service values and leadership practices, while expanding their professional networks.
- Seven participants completed a Regional Short Course on *Indigenous Environmental Knowledge*, which strengthened understanding of Indigenous perspectives on environmental management and equipped participants to support environmental outcomes.

- Six participants in total completed two climate-focused Regional Short Courses, supporting increased capability in responding to climate-related challenges (see page 07).

Australia Awards also supported a total of 102 participants from Bangladesh to build their knowledge through two APOs.

The first APO supported 100 indigenous women to begin training and capacity building activities and aims to strengthen the leadership, governance and advocacy skills of traditional women leaders from the Mong Circle in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The second APO supported two officials from the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute to attend the TropAg 2025 Conference in Brisbane, increasing their understanding of tropical agricultural research and establishing institutional relationships with Australian counterparts.

Alumni engagement

Australia Awards alumni engagement activities in 2025 focused on supporting professional development, building linkages and increasing knowledge of priority development topics, including gender equality, disability equity and environmental sustainability.

More than 690 participants collectively benefited from alumni engagement activities in Bangladesh. These activities included:

- a Reintegration Workshop for 21 newly returned Scholarship alumni, three of whom received awards for academic achievement in Australia
- a reception attended by 80 alumni, at which new Short Course alumni received their course completion certificates
- events organised by Adivasi Australian Scholars' Association of Bangladesh, including a celebration of International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
- a 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence workshop organised by the Bangladesh chapter of the Women in Leadership Network (WiLN).

Regional thematic alumni networks such as WiLN provided opportunities for alumni across South Asia and Mongolia to engage on gender equality, disability equity and environmental sustainability. A total of 22 regional alumni events registered 225 Bangladeshi participants. Activities included:

- a Regional WiLN seminar with Australia's Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Dr Anna Cody, facilitated by Bangladeshi alumna Lam-Ya Mostaque

- an Equity for All alumni network event for International Day of People with Disability, featuring Bangladeshi alumna Arefeen Ahmed as a speaker
- a three-part training series on creating safe and inclusive workplaces, for the Male Allies for Gender Equality alumni network.

Bangladeshi participant Mohammad Shaikh Salim Reza said the Male Allies for Gender Equality training was “an eye-opening workshop series that emphasised the vital role men have in creating respectful, inclusive and harassment-free work environments”.

Australia Awards also offered small grants to support alumni-led initiatives in Bangladesh. Across two grants rounds in 2025, Australia Awards provided:

- four grants to help alumni initiate communities of practice
- 16 grants to a total of 24 alumni to implement projects potentially benefiting over 11,800 people in their communities.

“The Australia Awards Scholarship was far more than an academic pursuit; it was a transformative voyage that broadened my horizons by opening enduring avenues to knowledge, skills and collaboration, and made me confident to serve as an agent of change.”

Khandker Jannatul Ferdouse
Master of Environment
The University of Melbourne, 2025



Strengthening climate leadership and resilience

Australia Awards is equipping emerging leaders from Bangladesh with the skills and networks needed to respond to the challenges of a changing climate. Action on climate change is central to Australia's international development priorities, and Australia is committed to improving the capacity of partner governments to manage the impacts of the climate crisis.

This commitment was reflected in the delivery of two climate-focused Regional Short Courses in 2025. Three Bangladeshis completed a Regional Short Course on *Integrating Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction*. Participants explored how stronger policy coherence between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation could support sustainable development.

Three Bangladeshis also undertook a Regional Short Course on *Accessing Climate Finance*, which built participants' capability to navigate the complex landscape of climate-related finance, international agreements, green banking and sustainable investing.

These two Regional Short Courses each included two weeks of learning in Australia, enabling participants to network with Australian experts.

Australia Awards also sought to strengthen scholars' ability to respond to climate change more broadly. A highlight was Climate Literacy training facilitated by Edith Cowan University. Over three sessions, nine scholars from Bangladesh joined 21 others from

South Asia and Mongolia to explore practical strategies for reducing emissions and influencing policy.

Reflecting on the training, Bangladeshi participant Sukti Peya Das said, "This training inspired me to approach climate action with resilience, acknowledging that every individual effort is integral to the broader movement for sustainability."

The Champions for the Environment and Climate Action alumni network convened two online events on climate finance attended by Bangladeshi alumni:

- a seminar with Dr Oyun Sanjaasuren, Director of Partnerships and Resource Mobilization at the Green Climate Fund, facilitated by Bangladeshi alumnus Kabir Palash
- a workshop where alumni shared their experiences of accessing climate finance.

Image: Bangladeshi Australia Awards alumna Sukti Peya Das (Master of Public Policy, the University of Western Australia, 2025), who completed the Climate Literacy training during her time as a scholar.



Case studies

Scholars strengthen leadership skills at Scholar Symposiums

From October to December 2025, 58 Bangladeshi Australia Awards scholars participated in six Scholars Symposiums across Australia. These events were designed to help scholars develop the skills to be changemakers after completing their Scholarships.

Delivering opening remarks in Perth on behalf of the scholars, Nahid Nawrin Sultana said, “We are all here with one mission: to learn to lead, and to make an impact.”

A highlight of each symposium was a panel of experts speaking about various leadership topics, including the importance of values for leaders, tips for networking and advice on advocating for change. “My biggest takeaway,” said Melbourne-based scholar Suravi Rani Sutradhar, “was to stay genuine and keep advocating for my own ideas and values.”

The first afternoon of each symposium was dedicated to training to help scholars apply what they had heard across the morning. Melbourne-based scholar Mohoua Sobnam said that this training “helped me reflect on my personal leadership style and how to apply it in collaborative settings”.

On the second day of the symposiums, scholars examined their Development

Impact and Linkages Plans and whether they needed updating.

Each symposium concluded with scholars engaging with First Nations Australians. These activities included art lessons from Indigenous teachers and learning to throw a boomerang. Melbourne-based scholar Juliana Shetara said, “I enjoyed learning new things and meeting new scholars; the painting part was the thing I loved most.”

For many attendees, the most valuable aspect of the events was the opportunity to network with other scholars from the region. “This event brought me closer to the fellow future global leaders and significantly extended my network,” said Cairns-based scholar Supratic Chakma.

Summing up the views of many, scholar Nusrat Jahan said, “The practical strategies and real examples shared throughout the sessions ... motivated me to apply these skills confidently.”



Alumni unite for equity and development

Six Bangladeshis were among the 51 Australia Awards alumni from South Asia and Mongolia who attended the 2025 Regional Alumni Workshop in Sri Lanka on 7–9 April.

The workshop’s theme was ‘From inclusion to equity: Development for all’. Through alumni presentations, panel discussions and group exercises, attendees discussed advocacy for the rights of people with disability and people from traditionally marginalised communities. Thirteen participants were people with disability, including three from Bangladesh.

Bangladeshi alumni played a central role in delivering the workshop: Emerson Chakma and Dilruba Farzana each delivered a presentation showcasing their development work, while Arefeen Ahmed and Nurunnahar Nupur were both panellists.

Opening the event, HE Mr Paul Stephens, Australia’s then High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, said, “The workshop theme recognises that it is not enough to seek inclusion for people from marginalised communities and people with disability ... rather, we must tackle the unequal power systems and structures that hinder economic growth and human development.”

The workshop featured three keynote presentations, each followed by a discussion

panel featuring alumni. These presentations and panels covered topics such as advocacy by and for people with disability, the importance of making education accessible to all, and why development practitioners working with people with disability and from minority communities should consider intersectionality.

Participants also examined common challenges—dividing into groups to brainstorm approaches to each challenge, then presenting their ideas.

The workshop marked ten years since the inaugural Regional Alumni Workshop, at which the Women in Leadership Network was launched. The 2025 workshop saw the launch of the Equity for All alumni network, which will enable alumni to share knowledge and learn together through expert-led discussions, interactive workshops and peer-sharing sessions on key issues relating to disability and marginalised communities.

Image: Bangladeshi participants in the Scholars Symposium in Canberra with representatives of Bangladesh’s High Commission. From left to right: Banni Shikha Asha, Rony Chakma (Counsellor and herself an Australia Awards alumna), Kiriti Chakma (Counsellor), Abida Sultana and Sokina Aktar.

Australia Awards – Bangladesh forms part of the Australia Awards – South Asia & Mongolia Program and is managed by Palladium on behalf of the Australian Government.

Images in this publication are of Australia Awards recipients, scholars and alumni participating in Program activities.

To learn more about Australia Awards – Bangladesh, visit: www.australiaawardsbangladesh.org