

Partnership Development Justice

NEFZ  
নেফজ



Building a life we all deserve

Annual Report 2024

Coming Together for Equality



Inspected since 2002



## Priority area 1 Climate-resilient livelihoods

88,260 people secure their nutrition supply

4



## Priority area 2 Inclusive quality education

69,455 children attend pre- and primary school

6



## Priority area 3 Equal human rights

16,130 human rights defenders prevent violence

8



## Priority area 4 Just transformation

6,253 project participants secure their homes against the threat of the climate crisis

10



## Priority area 5 Disaster response

384 families receive support to rebuild their homes

12



## Political dialogue and networking

Strengthening voices from Bangladesh's civil society

13



## Activism and global learning

More than 2,500 volunteers are active for NETZ in Germany

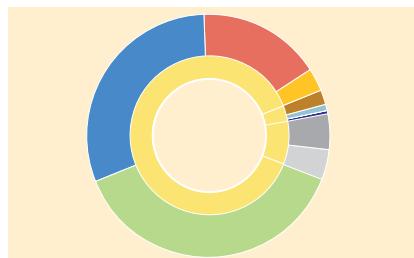
14



## How we work Organisational structure

Coming Together for Equality: NETZ presents its new vision and principles

17



## Financial Report & transparency 2024

For every euro spent, 90 cent go to development projects, 2 cent to global learning and 8 cent to administration, advertising and the NETZ association

19



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"Bangladesh has always been an integral part of our school life. It gave me great pleasure to raise awareness among young people about the needs in a completely different country and to support their commitment to the partner school in northern Bangladesh. The NETZ staff were always there to assist us. Bangladesh has become very important to me, which is why I like to donate to a NETZ project on my birthdays."

Jenni Meister,  
Former secondary school teacher  
in Schüttorf



"I have been a member of NETZ's working group on education for several years, during which I have created learning materials, organised workshops, and led project days. This group has become an important learning space for me, where I can further my education alongside others and engage with complex topics. For a just society, it is crucial to create awareness of global connections."

Esther Worobjoff

### Dear people committed to a just and equitable world,

While Diya Moni (cover) cheerfully serves tea, she talks about the profound changes in her life. When she opened her restaurant on the bridge in Kaharole and her rice dishes and snacks proved popular, a new era began for her and her family. Her daughter's future now looks very different from her own: she will receive an education, marry as an adult, and earn a secure living. These small revolutions, however, have been overshadowed by political changes over the last year. In the largest and, tragically, bloodiest uprisings in Bangladesh in decades, the population showed immense courage and sacrifice to overthrow a government that was ever less bound by democratic controls. Since then, Bangladesh has been in a transitional phase. Where it is headed is as controversial as its future is uncertain.

However, one thing is clear: in this transition, it is all the more important to stand firmly with the people of Bangladesh, especially those who are disadvantaged. Together with our partner organisations, we work every day to empower those people in projects ranging from villages to networks in the capital. At the same time, advocating internationally for solidarity and global development is becoming more challenging and urgent. There is a growing risk, even in Germany, that significant historical achievements in collective actions for equality may be undermined.

Fighting for equal rights for all people consistently, constructively, and cooperatively is not only a key value of those involved in NETZ – it is an essential means of securing dignity and a better future for all of us.

'Coming Together for Equality' is therefore also the motto behind NETZ's newly outlined principles. This annual report demonstrates that achieving this vision is possible – and shows how it can be done. We are deeply grateful to all those who have made this work possible.

Enjoy reading, and best regards



Dr. Max Stille,  
Executive Director



Niko Richter,  
Director

## Priority area 1

# Climate-resilient livelihoods



Laboni Akhter stands in the middle of her mustard field, which has become a vital source of income for her and her family.

### Successes of 2024

#### **88,260** people

secure their nutrition through established local self-help structures.

#### **In 14,343 cases**

women's self-help groups successfully claim the social benefits they are entitled to from the authorities.

#### **22,650 women**

**who previously lived in extreme poverty**  
now earn a sustainable income for themselves and their families.

#### **10,744 women**

educate themselves on agriculture and finance as well as women's rights, and apply their knowledge in everyday life.

### What we have planned for 2025

Since the launch of the priority area "Climate-resilient livelihoods," many project participants and their families have permanently overcome hunger and poverty. NETZ is working to ensure that these successes are sustained in the long term. One of the key tasks is maintaining close contact with well-established, independent village groups.



In NETZ projects, women work together to achieve economic success. Village groups provide the foundation for overcoming extreme poverty and building a life of dignity.

In late summer, the fields turn bright yellow and stretch as far as the eye can see. Mustard, a well-known crop, is grown here in northern Bangladesh—and it has transformed the lives of Sita Tudu, Minoti Rani, and Laboni Akhter. These three women are among the more than 22,000 success stories created by the NETZ project priority area “Climate-Resilient Livelihoods” in 2024. The concept is simple: women come together to form village groups, building a strong foundation of mutual support. They receive agricultural training and quickly improve their diets by raising chickens and ducks, and growing fruits and vegetables. They also plan how to generate sustainable income, whether through livestock farming, running small businesses, or, as in this case, cultivating mustard.

The three women, who were married as teenagers, once lived in extreme poverty. They were agricultural day labourers with no property of their own, living lives marked by dependence—on their husbands and the large landowners who provided them with work. They were trying to survive from day to day. However, this changed when they became project participants and joined their respective village groups. Laboni Akhter (26, mother of two) from Mofizpara received training in climate-resilient agriculture and started with a cow as start-up capital. Using the profits, she leased a plot of land where she now grows mustard and peanuts. Last year, she sold 40 kilograms and uses the oil she produces for cooking. She also shares tips from her farming experience with others around her. “I am proud to be able to provide for my family, and I thank my village group for enabling me to live



Raising and selling livestock such as cows, sheep and goats is an important part of agriculture- and a key method of generating income and securing livelihoods.



A pregnant project participant receives a savings box from her group, offering financial support. The women in the groups also share their knowledge, such as first aid skills, with one another.

independently.” Sita Tudu, an indigenous woman from Baipur, also learned from her village group that mustard is a resilient plant that requires little water and thrives well. For just under 30,000 taka (€250), she can sell her harvest from the previous year. Minoti Rani, a mother of four from Jianapara, expects to earn a similar amount. She never imagined she could make a living from mustard farming, and it is all thanks to the solidarity of her village group: “My dream has come true.”

#### Very good

Village groups strengthen the sense of community and boost individual self-confidence.

Project participants, who previously lived in social isolation, have gained access to the community and, with its support, have successfully asserted their rights in many cases when dealing with authorities.

#### Leading the way

Inclusive approach: NETZ projects empower village groups to support individuals with limited self-help skills in a spirit of solidarity.

Older people and individuals with disabilities, who are often excluded, thus become key agents.

#### To improve

The increasing number of problems caused by climate change calls for an expansion

of the self-help approach to drinking water supply.

#### Challenging

Political change in Bangladesh has led to a high turnover among local authority representatives. However, maintaining stable contacts

with these representatives is crucial for project participants when it comes to accessing state benefits.

Therefore, establishing and sustaining personal relationships remains of great importance.

#### Partnership

Whether working with local partner organisations or village groups themselves: For NETZ, equal partnership and trust, based on many years of experience, are paramount.

#### Participation

Community is a central aspect of our project work. We plan, decide, and act together, continuously exchanging ideas. This approach ensures that everyone involved is included.

#### Empowerment

The projects specifically activate the potential of marginalised people. They get involved, are strengthened in their self-confidence and contribute to the success of the work.

## Priority area 2

# Inclusive quality education



Fun is just as important as learning: preschool and primary school pupils at Taramon Bibi Anandalok School during their break. Play also promotes physical activity and strengthens social interaction among the children.

### Successes of 2024

**9,201** children

successfully complete primary school after grade 5 and are enrolled in a secondary school.

To support this transition, **4,290** children receive help with fees and school materials.

**515** primary schools

provide children with inclusive quality education.

These include **34** Anandalok schools, **60** village schools and **421** state schools.

**54** state elementary schools introduce preschool classes for the first time.

**69,455** children

participate in preschool and primary school education, including **15,835** from ethnic and religious minority groups.

**In 824** cases

committed teachers and social workers prevent children from dropping out of school. **208** health camps and **1,710** cultural and sports events strengthen the connection between local communities and their schools.

### What we have planned for 2025

375 schools in Bangladesh are receiving further support. A total of 11,220 children are set to start school. We will also continue working to improve access to education for children with disabilities.



NETZ schools provide children from disadvantaged families with an education and future prospects, empowering them to make a valuable contribution to their community for years to come.

It all starts with the youngest: preschool and primary school pupils at Taramon Bibi Anandalok School use their break to play and run around in the courtyard. Anandalok schools represent NETZ's pedagogical approach to basic education. They are purpose-built, firmly embedded in the village communities of rural, remote regions, and offer quality education to all children. Girls and boys enjoy learning here and are prepared for a self-determined future.

In addition to reading, writing, and arithmetic, the educational offering also includes natural history lessons, the development of social skills, as well as democratic education and shared decision making. This approach is promoted equally across all types of schools supported by NETZ: At Kukribon Primary School, for example, the children elected their own student representatives in 2024. The committee consists of seven children who organise events, maintain the school environment, and support pupils with any problems or questions.

The election day is a special day of celebration. Everyone gathers, a confidential vote is held, and the committee is formed amidst cheers. The principal confirms: The children's understanding of participation and democratic structures has grown significantly.

The state primary school was supposed to close years ago due to low attendance. But with the support of the NETZ education programme, the staff were able to help parents in difficult circumstances ensure their children attended school regularly. Today, 125 children attend Kukribon School, nearly all of them from indigenous communities. They are also supported in their transition to secondary school.

#### Very good

24 preschools set up through NETZ-projects are now financed and managed by the state, including their teaching staff.

#### Leading the way

Focus on Sustainability: When purchasing teaching and learning materials, partner organisations ensure they are produced in an environmentally friendly manner.

#### To improve

When extreme heat and flooding force schools to close temporarily, digital learning programmes are difficult to implement. Teachers and school social



It's a festive occasion and a boost to democratic awareness: At Kukribon Primary School, pupils elect their own student representatives.



A lasting impact: graduates of the Taramon Bibi Anandalok School on-site. Today, these young women and men remain actively involved in both the school and their village communities.

## NETZ supports three types of schools

**Anandalok schools** provide education for up to 180 children each (from preschool to fifth class). The village communities take responsibility for the schools.

**State primary schools** often exclude children from poor families, but NETZ works to prevent this. Additional teaching staff, the school community, and social workers support the children and help prevent them from dropping out.

**Village schools** offer education in particularly underserved areas, accommodating 30 girls and 30 boys.

workers then provide support to children through home visits.

#### Challenging

Inclusion remains a key issue. Teachers and the school environ-

ment are already being sensitised to the needs of all children. However, further concepts and the removal of structural barriers are needed to ensure equal educational opportunities.

#### Partnership

Teachers from Anandalok schools and state primary schools organise mutual visits, exchanging ideas on child-centred teaching methods. They reflect on their work and collaborate to develop new approaches.

#### Empowerment

Many girls and boys have already graduated from Anandalok schools. They remain actively involved with the institutions, volunteering their time to tutor new students.

#### Participation

Teachers and parents come together for informal meetings. Mothers and fathers become involved, learn about their children's achievements at school, and are thereby convinced of the value of school education.

## Priority area 3

# Equal human rights



### Successes of 2024

**43,732** people entitled to social benefits

now receive the support that they had previously been denied.

**4,266** adolescent and adult activists

receive training on topics such as human rights, gender equality, and democratic dialogue with authorities.

**546** human rights violations

have been documented and reported to state authorities.

**16,130** volunteer human rights defenders

advocate against discrimination and violence across **680** human rights committees.

**5,520** students

184 secondary schools promote the rights of girls and women in student forums.

**2,540** female students

take part in self-defence courses and pass on their knowledge to their classmates, friends and siblings.

### What we have planned for 2025

During Bangladesh's current political changes, protecting human rights remains crucial. It is essential to empower women, girls, and marginalised communities.

Therefore, we aim to provide new support to 550 human rights committees and 116 secondary schools.



In times of political change, the threat of abuse of power and discrimination persists. It is crucial to support individuals and groups who stand up for the rights of everyone.

Minara Khatun does something that some residents in her village of Nachole have a problem with: she plays football. And she's very good at it. The teenager scores plenty of goals in her spare time but is criticised because it is considered indecent. At the end of last year, religious zealots stormed a football pitch in Joypurhat and forcibly stopped the women's teams from playing. But Minara refuses to be deterred. On the contrary, she stands up for her rights and supports other girls in not letting themselves be oppressed and patronised in a male-dominated society.

Whether it's girls who aren't allowed to leave the house alone, indigenous people being driven from their land, or other violent conflicts: human rights defenders - volunteers from the heart of the village community - work in NETZ's projects to empower those who have no power and are deprived of their rights. The activists are local contacts who support victims and transform conflicts without violence. They prevent child marriages, intervene in cases of



Human rights group in the village: Activists seek dialogue at local, regional and national levels to raise awareness for disadvantaged groups.

#### Very good

Women human rights defenders remained active during and after the ousting of the Awami League government and were an important source of support for their communities.

#### Leading the way

NETZ's human rights work is now also taking place in southern Bangladesh. In Jessore and Satkhira, 72 human rights groups have been set up in schools and 78 human rights village groups have been newly founded.

#### To improve

The devastating consequences of the climate crisis, such as environmental destruction and water shortages, are sparking conflicts. This particularly affects marginalised indigenous groups and their

#### Partnership

Human rights defenders are a reliable point of contact within their communities and provide valuable support to those affected.



National Youth Forum in the capital Dhaka: At the end of 2024, the NETZ approach was recognised at this conference, where young human rights activists were honoured for their commitment to building an inclusive society.

domestic violence, and mediate in practical problems such as lack of access to water or roads. They hold regular meetings to address these issues and receive further training. Human rights groups established in secondary schools as part of the projects lay the foundation for the next generation to address major social challenges. Sexual harassment, the exclusion of social groups and people living in poverty, religious conflicts - young people are addressing these issues and seeking ways to create a peaceful society.



Human rights group at a school with a map they created themselves, marking harassment hotspots.

livelihood. Efforts to raise awareness of these impacts and find solutions are being intensified.

#### Challenging

While a new government is being formed, collabora-

tion with authorities and decision-makers, from local to national level, needs to be reorganised. This also creates new opportunities.

#### Participation

Marginalised groups are systematically involved in human rights work. Their situation, but also their successes, are made visible and recognised nationally through awards.

#### Empowerment

Girls and young women are encouraged to express their opinions publicly and defend themselves against violence. Their fellow students support them in doing so.

## Priority area 4

# Just transformation



Being able to grow their own food using resilient vegetable varieties, such as pumpkins and cucumbers, and overcoming the challenges posed by the climate crisis is crucial for the project participants, particularly in the southern coastal region of Bangladesh.

### Successes of 2024

#### 6,253 project participants

secure their homes against the threat of the climate crisis. They insulate walls, reinforce cattle sheds, and create natural protective barriers using trees and shrubs.

#### 320 students

independently plant trees in their neighbourhoods. Village groups receive 488 seedlings from the local authorities for their own planting campaigns.

#### 114 female project participants

develop their own action plans to improve disaster preparedness.

#### In 680 village groups and 184 schools

participants discuss the dangers and consequences of heatwaves and explore their causes in relation to climate change.

#### 114 schools

are being examined in a large-scale study to assess their safety during floods. Based on the findings, recommendations for precautions and emergency responses are being developed.

### What we have planned for 2025

Securing water supplies: Rising sea levels are threatening freshwater resources, particularly in southern Bangladesh. NETZ is supporting local projects in the region. People are being trained and supported in implementing their own sustainable concepts for fresh water supply in order to counteract increasing salinisation.



The consequences of climate change have long been part of everyday life for people in crisis regions. In NETZ projects, they tackle these challenges with knowledge and solidarity.

Repeated flooding and cyclones are some of the challenges faced by Sasanti Rani Biswas from the village of Nakna in the southern coastal district of Satkhira. Cyclone Remal, which devastated parts of Bangladesh and India in May 2024, also destroyed her home. But the young woman did not give up: „I have become strong enough to defy adversity.“

By this, she means above all her household and her livelihood as a farmer. Sasanti Rani Biswas saves some money and puts it into a ‘disaster fund,’ which has enabled her to rebuild her house shortly after the cyclone. Even more important, however, is structural self-help: the income from her five goats, seven ducks, and several chickens – kept safe during disasters thanks to disaster preparedness training – secures her livelihood. “The income from the animals helps me practically. But the fact that they are there also provides great emotional support to keep going.“

Dealing with the consequences of the climate crisis is a key aspect of NETZ’s work in Bangladesh. Amidst the challenges, there are proven and effective adaptation strategies. Many project participants living in climate crisis regions are in the same situation as Sasanti Rani Biswas. They apply what they have learned in training courses in practical ways within the projects: for example, building flood-proof livestock pens or protecting their vegetable gardens through techniques such as water beds and salt-resistant rice and vegetable varieties. Additionally, they learn how to prepare for recurring natural disasters such as floods and cyclones and how to respond as a community in times of emergency.

#### Very good

Trainings to prepare for emergencies have a lasting impact: in the event of floods and storms, project participants are able to better protect their belongings, themselves and their families.

#### Leading the way

A recent NETZ study shows that in regions where climate change is causing soil salinisation, sustainable agriculture is possible even under adverse conditions and provides new opportunities for people with limited access to resources.

#### To improve

Analysing regional climate risks and adaptation options is a complex process which often still requires the support of project staff. In the future, village groups aim to implement the process largely independently, with



Taking a stand against the climate crisis – project participants send a message to the international community.

#### Climate hotspot: Bangladesh’s south coast

Rising sea levels not only threaten settlements and lead to soil erosion and land loss. The salt water also causes soil degradation and contaminates drinking water. Cyclones, which are increasing in number and intensity, destroy infrastructure and homes. People are at risk of losing their livelihoods and are forced to migrate in search of work. The region is thus a prime example of the serious social consequences of the climate crisis in the Global South – where the regions most affected are those that contribute least to the crisis.



Project participants establish seed banks themselves. They serve not only as a valuable resource for them but also often benefit the village residents.

the support of a proven analysis tool.

#### Challenging

Climate change is leading to extreme weather conditions that facilitate the spread of animal diseases, such as goat plague.

Temperature fluctuations and variations in rainfall make it difficult for local authorities and farmers to take preventive measures. Close co-operation between village groups and the animal health workers trained in the project is essential.

#### Partnership

As with all other NETZ projects, the employees, including those from local partner organisations, and the project participants work hand in hand.

#### Participation

Knowledge about the challenges and solutions to the climate crisis emerges where its consequences are felt. Those affected are therefore important actors and voices in our project work.

#### Empowerment

Political decision-makers, the media and institutions are increasingly recognising and acknowledging the importance of the perspectives of those affected by the climate crisis.

# Priority area 5

## Disaster response

Weeks of flooding, heat waves and a cyclone severely affected Bangladesh over the last year. However, the precautions taken by people in the project areas proved efficient. Those affected were able to repair the damage quickly thanks to rapid, effective assistance.

In May 2024, Cyclone 'Remal' struck the coastal areas of southern Bangladesh with devastating force. Entire municipalities were evacuated, leaving homes and vital infrastructure in ruins. The natural disaster dealt a severe blow to the lives and livelihoods of millions of people, including participants in NETZ projects who had built a stable existence in the affected region. They were at risk of sliding back into extreme poverty as a result of the disaster.

Many project participants managed to cope with the consequences of the destruction by themselves and thus secured their livelihoods. Given the situation, NETZ nevertheless decided to launch a special donation campaign: 384 families who were particularly severely affected and unable to cope with the damage on their own received rapid support in rebuilding their homes. Meanwhile, many members of the village groups supported each other in the reconstruction efforts.

Five Anandalok schools in the Rangpur region were affected by flooding and temporarily became inaccessible in September. Local communities monitored the situation closely and ensured that students and teachers were safe.



During reconstruction: The house of a project participant damaged by Cyclone Remal has now been rebuilt to a safer standard.

During a cold spell last winter, village groups distributed blankets to families in need in 843 cases, in some instances in cooperation with local authorities.



At the beginning of 2024, a cold spell causes a sharp drop in temperature. Houses in rural areas become bitterly cold, and the harvest is affected.



In April, temperatures rise above 42 degrees. The heatwave claims lives, causes droughts, and forces schools to close temporarily.



In August, heavy rainfall causes devastating floods, particularly in the north-east. Almost six million people are affected.

## Impact monitoring: The responsibility of our work on the ground

### # Project monitoring

Monitoring and evaluation are integral to every NETZ project. How are the funds being used? How and where can we improve projects in the future? We review and discuss these questions with our partner organisations.

### 🌀 Studies and research

NETZ regularly collaborates with researchers and offers insights into and access to its project work. This collaboration results in independent studies on our project work, which also provide policy recommendations.

### 👥 Dialogue with participants

Before, during, and after projects, NETZ employees engage in direct dialogue with project participants to discuss developments, challenges, and successes.

# Political dialogue and networking

## Strengthening voices from civil society



Following the fall of the Awami League (AL) government in August 2024 – triggered by long-term grievances and violent crackdowns on student protests that left 1,400 people dead, according to the United Nations – Bangladesh is in a phase of political transition. Although the transitional government, led by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus, has established reform commissions and committed to democratic change, the situation remains tense.

Different political parties, their student organisations and religious movements, among other actors, are vehemently trying to exert their influence on the interim government and push through their distinct ideas for political and social change.

Amid this unclear balance of power, critical voices from civil society continue to be marginalised. The representation of women and minorities is particularly at stake. The Bangladesh Forum Germany has continued to amplify these voices internationally also after the ousting of the government.

The importance of this is underscored by reports from the reform commissions, which reveal, for example, that the previous government manipulated socio-economic data for years. Unfortunately, despite warnings from civil society, the international community often accepted

the government's accounts at face value. Once again, it is clear that reliable civil society voices are essential for poverty reduction, the protection of human rights, and sustainable development.

This also includes the appropriate participation and financial resources for civil society actors. In 2024, the Bangladesh Forum, together with numerous German development and human rights organisations, took a firm stand against the planned cuts in development cooperation in the 2025 federal budget in Germany, and called for more support for the important work on the ground.

Since the fall of the previous government, there have also been acts of retaliation in Bangladesh: denunciations and cases of vigilante justice are on the rise. To counter this violence,

the Bangladesh Forum Germany supports the idea of a comprehensive social healing process. This includes truth commissions, reparations, an active culture of remembrance, and far-reaching reforms that complement legal measures to hold perpetrators accountable.

### The Bangladesh Forum Germany

The Bangladesh Forum Germany is a network of church-based development organisations, development and human rights organisations, academics and Bangladeshis living in Germany. It supports the concerns of Bangladesh's civil society. NETZ is entrusted with the coordination of the forum.



NETZ takes a stand and advocates for better development policies and financing – here at a protest against budget cuts in Berlin.

# Activism & Global Learning

## Together for more equality



Guests of numerous supporters and the NETZ general meeting in 2024: The visiting group from Bangladesh (here at the Michael-Ende Gymnasium Tönisvorst).

Learning, understanding and standing up for equality together: a broad network of volunteers raises public awareness in Germany about NETZ's work in Bangladesh and carries out important educational work throughout the year.

Education is not only a key part of NETZ's work in Bangladesh, but it also took centre stage in development education in Germany in 2024. Across numerous events, volunteers shared their knowledge about Bangladesh and global interconnections, providing practical insights into the local education situation. The target groups were primarily school classes, church groups, fair trade shops, and other educational institutions.

### First-hand insights through visits

In the summer of 2024, as an initiative of NETZ, an expert group from Bangladesh, comprising of a teacher and education trainers from the NETZ partner organisation Anandalok Trust, visited Germany.

In more than a dozen events, the practitioners from Bangladesh – Abdha Afrin Jhorna, Nazma Aktar, and Sham-sul Huda – presented the education system, alternative approaches, challenges, and opportunities in Bangladesh. The exchange with volunteers, students, teaching staff, and parent representatives in Germany was enriching for both sides.

In Krefeld, the group discussed kindergarten concepts and early childhood education. At secondary, primary, and comprehensive schools in Tönisvorst, Wetzlar, Heuchelheim, and Duisburg, the visitors explained how schools and co-determination work in Bangladesh. This also highlighted the sometimes harsh learning conditions and the great value placed on education. The visits, including to the one-world shop in Werne and the Wetzlar city administration, reinforced the importance of the partnership between civil society groups in Germany and the people of Bangladesh.

### Bangladesh Conference: 35 years of NETZ

The NETZ general meeting and Bangladesh conference in June 2024 featured a diverse programme focusing on the key topics of education and knowledge. Bangladeshi education experts from the expert group and the NETZ country office manager in Bangladesh, Habibur Rahman Chowdhury, provided insights into opportunities, challenges and potential in education in Bangladesh. It was all about exchange and mutual learning: How does 'education for a just world' work, what role does child-centred pedagogy play, and how can NETZ-supported Anandalok schools implement targeted prevention and protection measures against natural disasters like floods?

### Our year 2024 in numbers

<b>4,650</b>	<b>children, young people and adults</b>
take part in 26 global learning events.	
<b>More than 2,500</b>	<b>volunteers</b>
are active for NETZ throughout Germany.	
<b>217</b>	<b>new supporters</b>
have been campaigning for nutrition, education and human rights with NETZ.	
<b>33</b>	<b>parishes</b> enable a total of 1,637 children in Bangladesh
to attend school through the carol singing.	



It became clear how crucial it is to support these girls and boys, and what a significant role the school community plays for the entire village.

Participants also had fun practising new skills at the Bratachari dance workshop, where all guests were invited to join in.

### Solidarity campaign: "Finally, school!"

Numerous advocacy groups, some of which have been involved for many years, came together in 2024 to support NETZ and its work in Bangladesh, sending an important signal of global solidarity.



Students at St.-Ursula-Gymnasium in Freiburg earnestly supported the campaign through their summer festival.

These include one-world shops, church communities, private individuals, student initiatives, and sustainability groups. As part of the large-scale solidarity campaign 'Finally, School!', schools and other institutions in Weimar, Freiburg, and Wetzlar, among others, enabled 150 children in Bangladesh to attend school and helped establish 120 school libraries. Additionally, there were numerous fundraising campaigns as part of public events such as the women's clothing market in Rellingen, the Ochsenfest in Wetzlar, and, as every year, the nationwide carol singing campaign at the end of the Christmas season, during which more than 30 communities in Germany collected donations for NETZ school projects.

### Sharing knowledge, raising awareness

An important task of NETZ and its numerous volunteers is to provide opportunities for development education. They organised 22 events at schools, universities, and adult education centres, as well as online, reaching several hundred people. Topics included climate justice, the textile industry, education and development, and feminist perspectives. A photo exhibition on climate change was also shown at four locations across Germany, reaching a large audience. The NETZ working group on education develops concepts and materials for educational work. Its members gathered for a procedural meeting and a methodology workshop on two weekends in 2024.



In October, NETZ relocated from its long-standing headquarters in Wetzlar to Giessen (Marktlaubenstr. 9).

### Public relations

NETZ informs the public about politics, society, economics, and culture in Bangladesh. The NETZ website offers background articles, analyses, and expert interviews on the most important global and development policy issues – including those that receive less attention in the German media. We also provide information through monthly newsletters and press releases. German and international media reported on our work 36 times in 2024. The Bangladesh magazine NETZ is the most important publication in German on Bangladesh, both in print and online.

### Volunteer service



Active and creative in educational work: the NETZ working group on education.

Since 1991, NETZ has been sending young people to Bangladesh to learn and work with our local partners. As in previous years, the volunteer programme was suspended in 2024 due to the security situation in Bangladesh. The programme is being further developed conceptually with the aim of resuming it, including a reverse voluntary service programme from Bangladesh to Germany. André Schönhardt served as a federal volunteer at the NETZ office in Wetzlar until August 2024.

# NETZ Anniversary: 35 Years of Commitment to Human Dignity

In 2024, NETZ celebrated its 35th anniversary. Since 1989, the association has stood for dedication, solidarity and partnership.



Starting with a group of young people and their magazine, NETZ has grown over the past 35 years into a community of solidarity and a large, strong network in South Asia and Europe. The history of NETZ is shaped by people who stand together for justice, by challenges, successes, and changes. Always at the core lies the passionate commitment to human dignity and self-determined development in Bangladesh. During the celebration at the general meeting in June, numerous companions and NETZ activists reflected on decades of NETZ history. The event featured photos, memories, speeches, art, and music. Once again, there were many encounters between several 'generations' of NETZ volunteers, the NETZ team, and guests from Bangladesh.



Exchanging ideas through fun and games: A Bratachari workshop was part of the Bangladesh Conference and NETZ General Assembly 2024.

## Special appreciation for Manfred Krüger



Julia and Manfred Krüger (centre) during his farewell at the general meeting.



Amidst all the gratitude for what had been achieved and the fond memories, there was also a moment of emotion: Manfred Krüger, founding member and long-standing chairman of NETZ, reflected on the past and stepped down from his role as chairman of the association's executive board.

Using artworks from Bangladesh and Germany, he highlighted shared ideas and perspectives, combined with personal insights. His extraordinary commitment was acknowledged with special thanks from the participants. Manfred Krüger summed up what will remain important in the future: "We are determined to be loud and active in promoting an open, pluralistic, united and non-violent society – everywhere."

# How we work

## Organisational structure

### Three principles of NETZ



#### Partnership

We work together and at eye level with the people on the ground. We reflect and break through donor-recipient relations and live appreciation.

#### Participation

Our projects focus on the specific situation on the ground and are based on the knowledge and ideas of the local people, for whom we work. They themselves implement the projects.

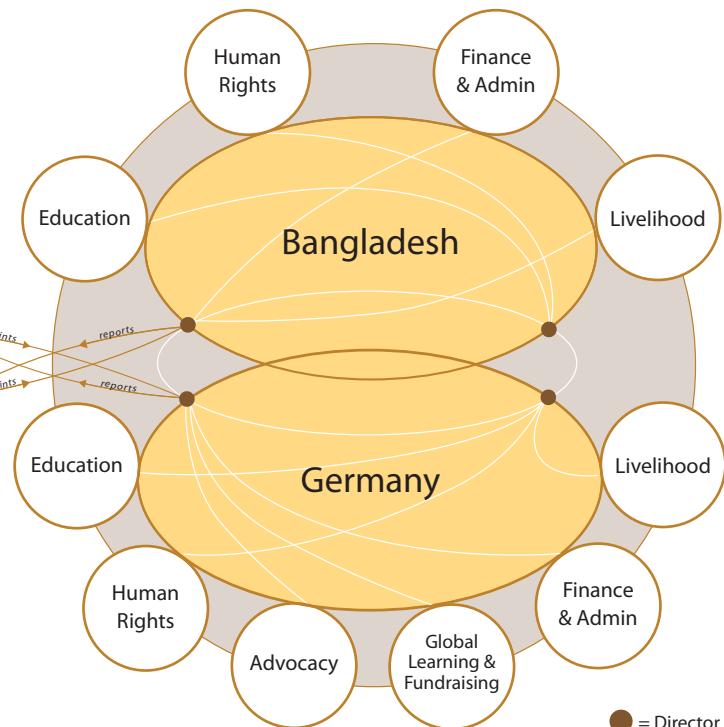
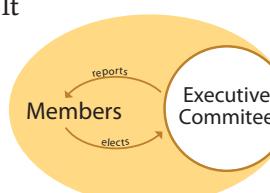
#### Empowerment

We stand for self-determined, emancipated and sustainable development – for people who lived in poverty, who were marginalised and who experienced violence.

### Association

NETZ Partnerschaft für Entwicklung und Gerechtigkeit e.V. (Partnership for Development and Justice) is a registered association (Reg. No. VR1790, Register of Associations at the Local Court of Wetzlar) and pursues exclusively charitable and non-profit purposes. The association has 255 voting members (June 2025). As the supreme body, the annual general meeting decides on the principles of NETZ, amendments to the statutes and the acceptance of the annual financial statements. It elects the honorary Executive Committee (EC) for a period of two years and the honorary auditors, who may not be members of the EC.

The EC decides on the annual budget, principles of project funding and the policies of the association. It appoints the management, which is bound by the approved budget and policy documents, the statutes of NETZ and the decisions of the EC and the general meeting.



### Offices and employees

NETZ employs 17 full-time staff across 14 positions in Germany and 23 in Bangladesh. The monthly gross basic salary in Germany is 3,100 euros for a full-time position and increases according to the degree of responsibility and competence. Every two years, the salary is increased by

70 euros up to a maximum of 350 euros. In addition, all full-time employees receive 120 euros for each dependent child. In 2024, the gross annual salaries of the directors were 65,860 and 65,380 euros.

# Coming together for Equality – NETZ in a Nutshell

With NETZ, committed people in Bangladesh, India and Germany stand up for dignity, self-determined development and climate justice. Together, we create sustainable pathways out of extreme poverty and for accessing basic education. We are dedicated to ensuring equal rights, particularly those of women and minorities. We act consistently, non-violently, and on equal terms.



## Committed people

**NETZ inspires me**

Layla Islam, Volunteer



## Bangladesh

**Partnership and Empowerment**

Habibur Rahman Chowdhury, Long-standing Country Director of NETZ in Bangladesh



## Global North

**Solidarity and responsibility**

Annette Greier, Active with NETZ and the fair-trade movement



## Living in dignity

**Now we are strong together**

Swapna Rani Barman, Voluntarily leads a federation of women groups



## Climate Justice

**Our future is decided here**

Sukanta Sen, NETZ Partner Organisation BARCIK



## Ways out of Poverty

**We never would have dreamed of that**

Sabita Pahan, Representative of a village group in the livelihoods programme



## Education

**Every day, I look forward to going to school and to seeing my friends.**

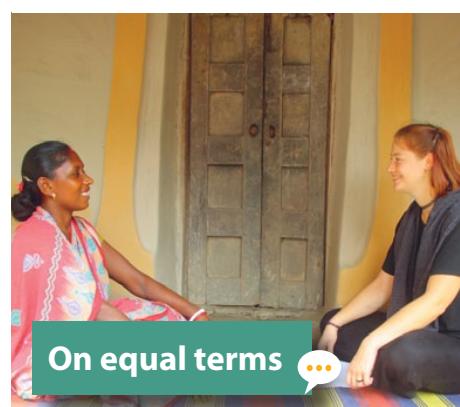
Nilima, Fenshi, Puspa and Alpona, Children in NETZ-supported schools



## Equal rights

**NETZ makes impact**

Meghna Guhathakurta, Human rights activist and public intellectual



## On equal terms

**Many perspectives – all equally valuable**

Melanie Gösse, Teacher at the Oberschule Schüttorf



Take a look at the quotes that make up our new core principles:

[www.bangladesh.org/vision-and-principles](http://www.bangladesh.org/vision-and-principles)



## Contact points for protection and complaints:

NETZ consistently advocates for human dignity and ensures ethical standards in the organisational environment in Bangladesh and Germany:

[www.bangladesh.org/en/protection-and-grievance-redress](http://www.bangladesh.org/en/protection-and-grievance-redress)

## Gender/Discrimination

NETZ does not tolerate any form of sexual harassment, gender-based violence or discrimination. This is based on our gender policy with a binding code of conduct.

Gender focal person::

Sara Khatun (Dhaka office)

[gender@netz-bangladesh.de](mailto:gender@netz-bangladesh.de)

## Child protection

NETZ is actively committed to the welfare of children and does not tolerate any form of child abuse, maltreatment or exploitation.

Child Protection officer:

Md. Abul Akram Tuhin (Dhaka office)

[childprotection@netz-bangladesh.de](mailto:childprotection@netz-bangladesh.de)



## Commitment that lasts: The NETZ Foundation

The NETZ Foundation ensures the sustainability of work in Bangladesh: it complements the direct funding of ongoing projects, provides protection against unforeseen risks, and promotes innovative approaches to poverty reduction. The foundation is managed in a fiduciary manner; the foundation's assets are invested exclusively in ethical, ecological, and social financial products. You can support the NETZ Foundation with unrestricted foundation, with a revocable gift or with a bequest.

# Financial Report 2024

## Income 2024

The association's income in 2024 amounted to 5.31 million euros. Donors entrusted NETZ with a total of 562 thousand euros. Donations and membership fees form the foundation and are a prerequisite for applying for other funding, and thus for the overall work of NETZ. Government funding in 2024 amounted to 4.09 million euros, with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) remaining the main donor. Donations, total income and government funding have thus risen slightly again after the downward trend in the previous year. Church grants for NETZ's work amounted to around 352 thousand euros, while grants from private institutions totalled 245 thousand euros.

## Expenditures 2024

NETZ allocates its funds to two statutory purposes: (A) development cooperation, particularly with Bangladesh, and (B) global learning and international understanding. The expenses for (C) advertising, association and administration serve both of these statutory purposes. In 2024, NETZ spent 4.62 million euros – 90% of total expenditures – on development cooperation with Bangladesh, India, and Nepal (A). 25% of total expenditures were directed towards the priority areas of 'Climate-resilient livelihoods' and 'Just transformation', 37% towards 'Inclusive quality education' and 24% towards 'Equal human rights'. The costs associated with political dialogue, focusing on promoting the issues of Bangladesh's civil society, accounted for 4% of expenditures. Global learning and international understanding (B) accounted for 104 thousand euros, or 2% of total expenditure. 9% of total expenditures, amounting to 424 thousand euros, were used for donor communications,

applying for public funding and grants, reporting, as well as general administration and organisational work (C). Personnel and operating costs are directly allocated to the respective area in accordance with the standards of the Donation Seal of the German Central Institute for Social Issues (DZI) and in line with the actual expenditure of time and money. Personnel costs in Germany amounted to 835 thousand euros (2023: 760 thousand euros).

## Situation and opportunities 2025

NETZ does not receive any structural funding and makes project commitments to partner organisations, and therefore to the people in the projects, before the necessary donations for a project have been fully secured. In cases where the German federal government's budget plans are uncertain, as in 2025, pre-financing is provided until the contract is signed with the ministry. Nevertheless, NETZ is always able to keep its commitments to project partners and the people involved in the projects. NETZ achieves this through successful project work, with a great deal of dedication on the ground, and through its solidarity-based and highly dedicated supporters, who stand by their commitments, especially in difficult times. Despite the political change in Bangladesh, NETZ was able to ensure the flow of funds to its projects in 2024. It is particularly gratifying that further reserves have been built up, which will secure the projects and offices, at least in the short term, even in times of crisis. In times of unprecedented cuts in international climate and development financing, continuing to advance important civil society work for equality and human dignity will remain a focus of NETZ's work in 2025.

## Income in €

1 January 2024 – 31 December 2024

		2024		2023	
		Earmarked revenues to be used for			
		in %	Development projects		
<b>Donations (excluding carol collections)</b>	<b>562,125.29</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>562,098.29</b>	<b>518,483.06</b>	
Financial Donations	562,125.29		562,098.29	27.00	
<b>Membership fees</b>	<b>18,042.55</b>	<b>0.3</b>		<b>18,042.55</b>	
<b>Government grants</b>	<b>4,094,924.41</b>	<b>77.1</b>		<b>3,674,440.56</b>	
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)	3,677,636.41		3,637,636.41	40,000.00	
European Union	414,888.00		414,888.00	0.00	
ifa, zivik Funding Programme (financed by German Foreign Ministry)	0.00		0.00	168,060.00	
The Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions	2,400.00		0.00	2,400.00	
<b>Donations from church-institutions</b>	<b>352,311.31</b>	<b>6.6</b>		<b>188,700.00</b>	
Action Committee Service for Peace	4,000.00		4,000.00	3,700.00	
Bread for the World – Protestant Development Service	155,811.31		155,811.31	11,000.00	
Kindermissionswerk: Carol singer campaign	72,500.00		72,500.00	151,500.00	
Misereor	120,000.00		120,000.00	22,500.00	
<b>Grants from private organizations</b>	<b>244,913.60</b>	<b>4.6</b>		<b>314,848.03</b>	
AK 5%, Düsseldorf	7,400.00		7,400.00	7,837.50	
Apo-Bank Foundation	4,967.00		4,967.00	0.00	
Ensinger-Foundation, Nufringen	0.00		0.00	103,490.00	
Development Aid Club, Vienna	125,367.24		125,367.24	116,825.53	
Childaid Network, Kronberg	56,165.36		56,165.36	0.00	
Familie Nowak Foundation, Usingen	15,000.00		15,000.00	25,000.00	
Mylius Foundation, Ludwigsburg	13,440.00		13,440.00	0.00	
Rivera Foundation, Bochum	6,884.00		6,884.00	12,445.00	
Rotary Clubs in Germany	15,690.00		15,690.00	37,250.00	
Schöck-Familien Foundation, Baden-Baden	0.00		0.00	12,000.00	
<b>Other: Income of the Dhaka office</b>	<b>801.93</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>801.93</b>	<b>4,097.89</b>	
<b>Participant fees for meetings and encounter programs</b>	<b>5,430.00</b>	<b>0.1</b>		<b>5,430.00</b>	
<b>Sales of magazines and media, fees, rental income</b>	<b>7,205.85</b>	<b>0.1</b>		<b>7,205.85</b>	
<b>Other operating income (wage continuation, health insurance, etc.)</b>	<b>14,867.71</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>14,867.71</b>	<b>6,787.02</b>	
<b>Interest</b>	<b>10,130.11</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>10,130.11</b>	<b>1,881.08</b>	
<b>Total income</b>	<b>5,310,752.76</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5,077,836.05</b>	<b>232,916.71</b>	
				<b>4,739,258.68</b>	



Project participants in Bangladesh and India raised a further **80,745** euros in 2024 to finance their projects.



In 2024, People active for NETZ have spent more than **30,100** hours working voluntarily for equality.

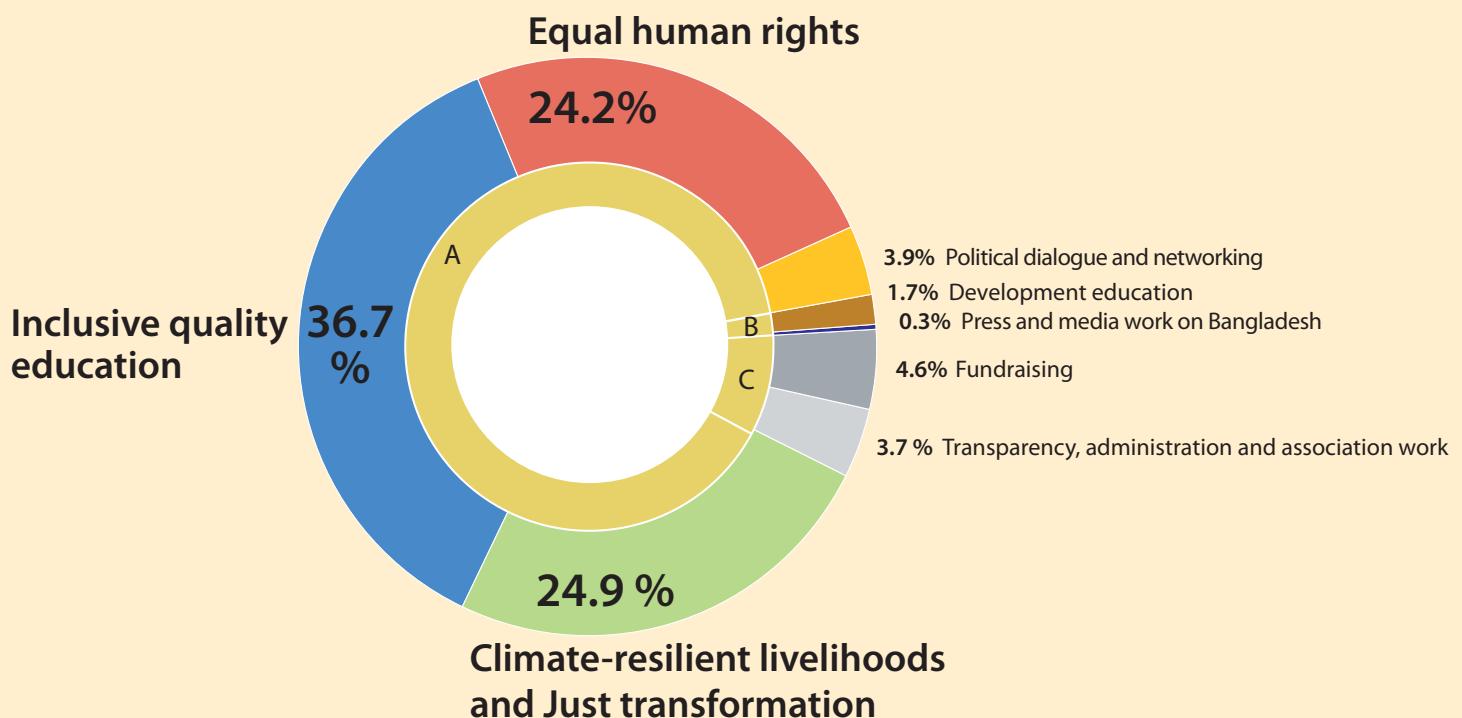
## Expenditure in €

1 January 2024 – 31 December 2024

	2024	in %	2023
<b>A Development cooperation</b>	<b>4,624,859.49</b>	<b>89.7</b>	<b>3,988,068.63</b>
Financing of development projects	4,420,459.82	85.8	3,847,599.88
Climate-resilient livelihoods	1,282,143.05	24.9	1,726,738.01
Inclusive quality education	1,890,752.44	36.7	1,388,489.42
Equal human rights	1,247,564.33	24.2	732,372.45
Political dialogue to strengthen civil society in Bangladesh	204,399.66	3.9	140,468.76
<b>B Global learning and international understanding</b>	<b>104,216.91</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>128,406.71</b>
Development Volunteer Service in Bangladesh and Exchange Programs	0.00	0	3,344.70
Development education in Germany	89,142.67	1.7	86,356.87
Press and media work on Bangladesh in Germany	15,074.24	0.3	38,705.14
<b>C Administration, fundraising and association</b>	<b>424,292.00</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>408,276.34</b>
Fundraising and public relations	235,934.05	4.6	216,159.95
Transparency, administration and association work	188,357.95	3.7	192,116.39
Total expenditures	<b>5,153,368.40</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4,524,751.68</b>

## Allocated personnel costs in €

A Development cooperation	464,315
B Global learning and international understanding	70,476
C Administration	137,355
Fundraising and public relations	162,386
Sum	<b>834,532</b>



## Balance sheet in € as of 31 December 2024

	2024	2023
<b>AKTIVA</b>		
Fixed assets	<b>11,349.00</b>	<b>2,325.00</b>
Office equipment	11,348.00	2,324.00
Apartment	1.00	1.00
Current assets	<b>2,145,870.43</b>	<b>1,628,225.18</b>
Bank, cash and advances for expenses	2,144,479.98	1,626,018.31
Receivables and other current assets	312.20	0.00
Rental deposit	1,078.25	2,206.87
Total assets	<b>2,157,219.43</b>	<b>1,630,550.18</b>
<b>PASSIVA</b>		
Own contribution as of 31 December 2024	<b>1,711,102.91</b>	<b>1,553,718.55</b>
Operating reserve	550,000.00	500,000.00
Free reserve	136,910.55	121,172.55
Reserve for development cooperation	744,370.03	654,370.03
Association capital	278,175.97	270,119.97
Results brought forward	1,646.36	8,056.00
Provisions	<b>22,067.07</b>	<b>22,833.43</b>
Other provisions	22,067.07	22,833.43
Current liabilities	<b>424,049.45</b>	<b>53,998.20</b>
Income tax and social security	9,161.45	8,379.20
For projects in Bangladesh: Liabilities to partner organisations	414,888.00	45,619.00
Total liabilities and shareholders' equity	<b>2,157,219.43</b>	<b>1,630,550.18</b>

## Balance sheet 2024

NETZ's fixed assets amount to 11 thousand euros for office equipment and an apartment donated to the association. NETZ's current assets, including bank and cash balances, amounted to 2.1 million euros as of 31 December 2024. At the end of 2023, the operating reserve was 550 thousand euros, and the free reserve amounted to 137 thousand euros. The reserve for development cooperation projects amounts to 744 thousand euros and the association's capital to 278 thousand euros. The operating reserve was thus increased by 50 thousand euros, the free reserve by 16 thousand euros and the reserve for development cooperation by 90 thousand euros. The results brought forward amounts to 2 thousand euros. Other provisions, particularly for vacation days not taken, amount to 22 thousand euros. At the end of 2024, NETZ had current liabilities of 424 thousand euros – of which 415 thousand euros were due to projects in Bangladesh, since the European Union had transferred project

funds for 2025 in 2024.

Further liabilities exist for payroll tax and social security in the amount of 9 thousand euros.

## Annual financial statements 2024

The annual financial statements of NETZ have been properly prepared in accordance with the German Commercial Code (HGB) and the guidelines of the DZI and the Code of Conduct on Transparency, Organisational Governance and Control of the Association of German Development NGOs (VENRO). Christine Radestock, the volunteer auditor elected by the general assembly of Members, reviewed the 2024 financial accounts at the Gießen office on 13 May 2025. Her audit report confirms that the expenditure was made in accordance with the statutes and the principle of economic efficiency. The members commissioned J + P Gruppe, Gießen, to audit the 2024 annual financial statements at the general assembly on 8 June 2024. On 16 May 2025, the auditing company

reported, based on the findings of the audit, that the annual financial statements of NETZ e.V. for the 2024 financial year comply with the requirements of German commercial law and give a true and fair view of the net assets, financial position and results of operations in accordance with German principles of proper accounting. The independent auditors Aziz Halim Khair Choudhury, Chartered Accountants, Dhaka, have audited the annual financial statements of NETZ's country office in Dhaka for the year 2024 and certified its regularity on 5 May 2025.

## Charitable Status

NETZ is recognized as a charitable and non-profit organization due to the promotion of development aid and international understanding according to the last exemption notice of the tax office Wetzlar (tax no. 3925051825) dated 4 April 2025 and is exempt from corporate and trade tax. The exemption is granted retroactively every three years.

# Transparency



The NETZ-team in Dhaka and Wetzlar.

## Seal of Approval

The German Central Institute for Social Issues (DZI) has awarded NETZ the DZI Seal of Approval every year since 2002. Tested and recommended: The DZI certifies NETZ with the award of this seal after a thorough examination:

- transparent, efficient and effective structures and processes
- respectability of the fundraising
- a low share of advertising and administrative expenses in total expense

## Your contributions make a difference

Working effectively and cost-efficiently is a core principle at NETZ, driven by our responsibility to the most disadvantaged people. This is ensured by professional project planning and oversight from our teams in Bangladesh and Germany. NETZ adheres to the VENRO Code of Conduct on Transparency, Organisational Management, and Monitoring, the VENRO Code Development Related

Public Relations, as well as the guidelines of the Initiative Transparent Civil Society and the International Statement of Ethical Principles of the German Fundraising Association.

We keep you informed about our work through our website, newsletters, and quarterly donation updates. At NETZ, personal dialogue is key, whether at events organised by us or our supporters. That's why we do not work with

### From every euro received in 2024

**90 ct**

went to development projects

**8 ct**

went to administrative work, advertisement and the NETZ association

**2 ct**

went to global learning and international understanding

commission-based fundraisers, nor do we purchase donor lists or invest in expensive advertising campaigns.

## Turn 1 € into 6 €

For every euro you donate to support people in Bangladesh and India, we are able to use 6 euros on the ground. This is possible because NETZ applies for government and non-government grants, making full use of available funding.

Take part – together, we can turn one euro into six!

## NETZ is member of

- Action Group Service for Peace (AGDF)
- Bangladesh Forum Germany - NETZ is entrusted with the coordination of the forum.
- Development Policy Network Hessen e.V. (EPN Hessen)
- Association of German Development and Humanitarian Aid NGOs (VENRO)

# Building a life we all deserve



For **93€**, a woman in Bangladesh can receive the basic equipment needed to set up a small kiosk – a sustainable way to provide for herself and her family in the long term.

## Donation account

Volksbank Mittelhessen (BIC: VB MH DE 5F)

**DE82 5139 0000 0000 0062 62**

[www.bangladesh.org/en/donation](http://www.bangladesh.org/en/donation)

## NETZ Partners and Projects

- Agrogoti Sangstha
- Amrai Pari (We Can Alliance, Bangladesh)
- Anandalok Trust
- Ashrai
- Bangladesh Resource Center for Indigenous Knowledge (BARCIK)
- Community Development Centre (CODEC)
- DASCOH Foundation
- Development Research Communication and Services Centre (DRCSC)
- Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK)
- Jagorani Chakra Foundation (JCF)
- Mahideb Jubo Somaj Kallayan Somity (MJSKS)
- Manab Kallyan Parishad (MKP)
- NETZ office, Dhaka
- Pollisree
- Research Initiatives Bangladesh (RIB)

- Climate-resilient livelihoods
- Inclusive quality education
- Equal human rights