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## **HSBC AND THE BRITISH COUNCIL PROVIDING YOUNG GIRLS WITH 21ST CENTURY SKILLS**

HSBC in partnership with the British Council are excited to announce the launch of a new programme providing life skills for 2400 young girls in Bangladesh. The programme 'English and Digital for Girls' Education' (EDGE), aims to improve life skills for out-of-school and marginalised adolescent girls and build their self-confidence to enable them to have a greater say in their futures.

The virtual launching ceremony of the EDGE 2021 programme was held on 21 September, in the presence of HE Robert Chatterton Dickson, British High Commissioner to Bangladesh; Md Mahbub ur Rahman, Chief Executive Officer, HSBC, Bangladesh; Tom Miscioscia, Director Bangladesh, British Council; and EDGE Peer group leaders Jenny Akter and Sadia.

'EDGE' will use a combination of face-to-face and remote delivery models, aiming to reach the marginalised adolescent girls across Bangladesh and offer them the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. This joint effort will benefit these marginalised students significantly by providing them 21<sup>st</sup> century skills of English and IT and opening new perspectives for them. This is especially relevant given the reduction of educational opportunities for children during the time of pandemic. The programme builds on the successes of previous EDGE programmes the British Council has run since 2012 and includes new training components. EDGE is designed around a 'Peer-led' model where more senior girls are trained as 'Peer group leaders' who then deliver training to their counterparts. This model builds capacity amongst young women and fosters sustainability.

**HE Robert Chatterton Dickson, British High Commissioner to Bangladesh** said, "English language and digital skills are important tools for success in the 21st century economy, in Bangladesh as elsewhere. With EDGE Bangladesh, the British Council and HSBC aim to build these capabilities among marginalised adolescent girls, helping to give them economic opportunities and strengthen their voices. It supports our work with the Government in Bangladesh and elsewhere to make education more equitable and boost girls' life chances. The disruption caused by the COVID pandemic has made this work all the more important and urgent and I am very pleased to be launching this programme today."

In this regard, **Md. Mahbub ur Rahman, Chief Executive Officer, HSBC Bangladesh** said, "At HSBC, our social sustainability strategy is focused on providing future skills for our customers, employees and for the community. With project 'EDGE' reaching 2400 young girls located in urban and rural areas of Bangladesh, we trust that it will provide useful skills to help them thrive now and in the future. I want to thank the British Council for partnering with us on this great

**Tom Miscioscia, Director Bangladesh, British Council** said, “We are particularly proud to launch EDGE 2021 to coincide with our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of operations in Bangladesh and Bangladesh’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence. The British Council is keen to work with strong partners like HSBC to increase English proficiency, build digital 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and awareness of social issues, among marginalised women and girls, so that they can make more informed and independent life choices in order to contribute more fully to the family, the economy and society”.

HSBC and the British Council are also partnering with local providers Dnet and Spreeha Foundation in the implementation across Bangladesh.

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**Note to editors:**

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