

Press release

Dhaka, 12 August 2015

The British Council and HSBC Launch “Play, Learn, Act” Reading Programme for Children



Photo names: from left (front) Barbara Wickham, Director Bangladesh, the British Council, Dr. Atiur Rahman, the Honourable Governor Bangladesh Bank, Francois de Maricourt, Chief Executive Officer, HSBC Bangladesh and Md Anwarul Haque Director Policy and Operations, Directorate of Primary Education, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education.

‘Play, Learn, Act’ is a new project of the **British Council** in partnership with **HSBC**, that will support children, teachers, school administration staff and parents in Bangladesh to enhance their English language skills through school activities, community events and competitions.

To mark its 150th anniversary, HSBC is making an additional global fund of USD\$150m available over three years (2015-2017) to local charities and the British Council will receive a grant from this fund to deliver the ‘Play, Learn, Act’ programme.

The launch ceremony of the 'Play, Learn, Act' programme, jointly organised by the British Council and HSBC was held at **Amtoli Staff Welfare Government Primary School, Mohakhali, Dhaka** on **12 August 2015** from **10:00 am to 11:00 am**.

Dr. Atiur Rahman, the Honourable Governor of the Central Bank of Bangladesh, attended as Chief Guest to inaugurate the programme.

The programme's objective is to enhance English literacy and communication skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) of **22,500 students** from **20 primary schools** over a span of three years, by introducing books and digital resources which will develop their analytical and thinking skills and help them express their thoughts and ideas in a more articulate manner. The schools, nominated by the British Council and HSBC and approved by the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, will receive approximately 500 English language story books which will include high quality English language lesson plans and materials.

Project activities will also include 'Teaching Reading' workshops, training for HSBC volunteers who will conduct interactive sessions and resource orientation with the students, dissemination of books, reading activities, assessment, intra-school art competitions and an award-giving event.

Francois de Maricourt, Chief Executive Officer, HSBC Bangladesh said: *"How we do business is as important as what we do. Every year, thousands of HSBC employees around the world give their time and skills to local projects. We are delighted to build on this long standing commitment by partnering with the British Council to support their 'Play, Learn, Act' programme."*

Barbara Wickham, Director Bangladesh, the British Council said: *"The grant from HSBC will allow us to enhance English language literacy and communication skills in primary school students and we are pleased to support the positive impact that this programme will deliver."*

Md Anwarul Haque, Director Policy and Operations, Directorate of Primary Education, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education also spoke on the occasion. Amongst others senior officials of the British Council and HSBC Bangladesh, students, teachers and volunteers of HSBC Bangladesh were present.

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For further information please contact:

Talukdar Noman Anwar, Country Head of Communications, HSBC Bangladesh on +880 9612 771 200 or at talukdarnomananwar@hsbc.com.bd
Arshia Aziz, Head of Marketing and Communications, British Council. Email: Arshia.Aziz@bd.britishcouncil.org

Notes to Editors:

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them worldwide. We work in more than 100 countries and our 8,000 staff – including 2,000 teachers – work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year by teaching English, sharing the arts and delivering education and society programmes.

All our work is in pursuit of our charitable purpose and supports prosperity and security for the UK and globally. For more information, please visit: www.britishcouncil.org.bd

The HSBC Group

HSBC Holdings plc, the parent company of the HSBC Group, is headquartered in London. The Group serves customers worldwide from over 6,100 offices in 72 countries and territories in Asia, Europe, North and Latin America, and the Middle East and North Africa. With assets of US\$2,572bn at 30 June 2015, HSBC is one of the world's largest banking and financial services organisations.

HSBC's US\$150m community fund

HSBC marks its 150th anniversary in 2015. As part of this, HSBC has made a US\$150m fund available to community projects over three years (2015-2017). More than 140 charities worldwide have been selected by HSBC's management team, based on votes from HSBC employee for charitable themes. The US\$150m fund is in addition to the US\$114m HSBC makes available to community investment programmes globally each year. Further details: <http://www.hsbc.com/citizenship/sustainability>