

Dr. Chowdhury is a development practitioner with over 30 years of experience in international human and social development. She spent most of her career at the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Her work focuses on research, evaluation, project and program design, implementation, and results management. She managed and led sector-wide approach (SWAP) in the education sector in partnership with the government and large number development partners in Nepal, Samoa, and Tuvalu. Additionally, she promoted the concept of SWAP in other developing nations to ensure efficient use of funding by the large donor community using government systems. She guided project team leaders of various sectors in the South Asia Regional Department of ADB, such as energy, transport, education and health, and water sectors among others, to logically design the projects to achieve results.

She retired from ADB as a Senior Results Management (Evaluation) Specialist in 2014. Dr. Chowdhury led and conducted studies in the arena of education and skills development focusing on equity issues in education and development, the results of which were published as policy and strategy papers. Her main interest is in analyzing how political economy and structural issues shape educational development and perpetuate inequity, and how policy and strategies could mitigate obstacles, while recognizing that education policy alone cannot fix structural issues. With the belief that theories and policies should be translational and implementable, she used a theory-testing process to produce knowledge to apply in the projects and programs she designed and implemented.

She has a Masters in Education (M.Ed), in the field of Comparative and International Education, from the University of Alberta, Edmonton, and a PhD in Comparative Education from the University at Buffalo, The State University of New York. Her coursework covered education administration, policy and strategy formulations, education and historically oppressive structures, research methodologies, and economics of education. Her minors were in sociology of education and Women's Studies. Her M.Ed thesis was titled "Educational Development in Bangladesh with Special Emphasis on Universalization of Primary Education" in which she analyzed the structural barriers to the universalization of primary education and political economy of educational development in Bangladesh. Her PhD dissertation was titled "Education, Work, and Women's Lives: Can Education Provide Women with Power and Autonomy?" For her dissertation, she used the qualitative research methodology, such as interviews and participant observations, in Dhaka's urban slums for three years. Her research revealed that education or work alone cannot provide women with power and autonomy. Women need at least secondary education and work outside the home to achieve significant decision making power and autonomy.

Dr. Chowdhury's country experience covers Bangladesh, Canada, China, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Kiribati, Lao PDR, Maldives, Nauru, Nepal, Palau, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tonga, Tuvalu, USA, and Vanuatu.