

DBU students test soil, prepare ground for the gospel in Bangladesh

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Students in an upper-level ecology class at [Dallas Baptist University](#) taught by Deanna Noyes, professor of biology and natural sciences, tested the soil of rural rice fields outside of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

And in the process, the team helped a ministry to Muslims figuratively prepare the ground for planting gospel seeds in rural Bangladesh.

Deanna Noyes (left), Dallas Baptist University professor of biology, works with (left to right, clockwise) Elizabeth Phongphraphan, Max Lee, Schelly Corry, Martha Seeder and Harold Sadler to test the soil of rice farms in Bangladesh in collaboration with the nongovernmental organization, Humanitarian Aid for Rural Development. (PHOTO/Jon Dooley/DBU)

The class tested 34 fields throughout the week. Over the course of their investigation, they identified fungal infections and insect infestations in more than half the fields examined.

In response to the discovery, the class helped develop a treatment plan designed to improve the crops of local farmers, who typically struggle to produce enough food to feed their families and make a living.

In addition to testing soil, the DBU volunteers distributed medicine,

provided eyeglasses and helped Bengali people secure micro-loans from [Humanitarian Aid for Rural Development](#), a nongovernmental organization.

The microloans will enable farmers to purchase chickens and cows and allow tailors and seamstresses to buy sewing machines.

The NGO works with more than 7,000 families in rural Bangladesh. The organization built a medical clinic—the only one in the area—that serves more than 300,000 people.

“We seek to impact the Muslim society holistically,” said Amie Sarker, director of DBU’s master of education in reading and English-as-a-Second-Language program. “We go home-to-home and share the gospel one-on-one after we have built relationships with the people.”

The team went to Bangladesh to meet physical needs, but they also addressed spiritual needs by sharing the love of Christ.

“We were able to meet some very pressing needs that are directly linked to adequate food supplies within these villages,” Noyes said. “But we were also able to establish relationships with the Bengali people that will yield fruit in the future and in eternity.”