

## Sir Fazle Hasan Abed wins 2015 World Food Prize

"Everything we did in Bangladesh we did with one focus: getting poor people out of poverty because we feel that poverty is dehumanizing."



### **His organization, BRAC, has lifted 150 million people out of poverty.**

The World Food Prize is not as famous as the Nobel Prizes. After all, this prize only began in 1986, while the first Nobel Prize ceremony took place in 1901. And the prize's location is a little more down-to-earth than the grand halls in Oslo or Stockholm. This prize comes from Des Moines, Iowa. But the World Food Prize is quickly gaining renown around the world, due to the importance of its mission: which is recognizing, quote, "the achievements of individuals who have advanced human development by improving the quality, quantity or availability of food in the world." The prize helps to bring publicity to worthy organizations and people, and also comes with a \$250,000 cash prize to support the work of the prize winners.

This year's World Food Prize winner is Sir Fazle Abed Hasan. He is the president and founder of BRAC, which stands for Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee. BRAC is the world's largest non-governmental development organization. Sir Fazle, a social worker, started BRAC in his native country, Bangladesh, in the early 1970s. Bangladesh had just successfully fought a war of independence with Pakistan. However, this brutal war had left millions of Bangladeshis in desperate need.

Sir Fazle used his own money from selling his house to start BRAC. His organization has helped people get access to food, education, shelter, and healthcare. It also helped many poor Bangladeshis start their own businesses. This model proved so successful that other countries wanted in on it. In its four decades of operation, BRAC has helped more than 150 million people out of poverty in Asia and Africa.



## **U.S. food scientist Dr. Norman Borlaug started this award in 1986.**

Dr. Norman Borlaug founded the World Food Prize in 1986. He was the right person to do it — after all, he was one of the most important food scientists in modern world history. Born and raised in Iowa, Dr. Borlaug studied genetics and plant pathology at the University of Minnesota. In the early 1940s, he was part of a U.S. government team that went to Mexico to help that country develop its agricultural sector.

Through experiments and crossbreeding, Dr. Borlaug developed strains of wheat that could resist certain diseases. This helped Mexican farmers to feed their own people rather than relying on imports. Dr. Borlaug's expertise helped increase agricultural yields throughout Latin American and Asian nations, including India and Pakistan. For this, he received the 1970 Nobel Prize, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the nickname, "The Man Who Saved a Billion Lives."

Since 1986, people have won the World Food Prize for many different reasons. Catherine Bertini, a native of the U.S., won in 2003 for her administration of the United Nations' World Food Program, especially for her work helping poor women and children. Ethiopian scientist Gebisa Ejeta, who now teaches at Purdue University, won the prize for developing new forms of sorghum wheat that can resist both droughts and diseases. This is especially important for the people of East Africa where droughts can quickly lead to famine. Other honorees include world leaders, food hygiene experts, and developers of biotechnology.