**Introduction**

The Grameen Caledonian College of Nursing (GCCN) is the vision of Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus, in partnership with Glasgow Caledonian University. GCCN operates as a social business that provides opportunities for young women from poor rural backgrounds to undertake higher education supported by an educational loan from the Grameen Bank. Through GCCN, young women study to be nurse/midwives at an international standard. They are prepared to be, not only nurses, but change agents and leaders for the future. Empowered themselves through education, they in turn will empower other young women. Additionally, they will be able to make a financial contribution to their families and communities, and provide a resource for health locally and internationally. The potential impact of this education on poverty and health behaviour among students, communities, and families is enormous and is being evaluated. This project is a successful social business model providing quality education that can be replicated in other situations and countries.

**Challenges**

Young women from the poor rural areas in Bangladesh suffer from major educational and career disadvantages. Only 30% take the Higher School Certificate, and they rarely have the opportunity to develop their education beyond the secondary level. Families earn less than $3 per day and girls are married young, with the consequences of not only dashed hopes but early pregnancy and often early death. Maternal mortality is an estimated 194 deaths per 100,000 (2010). In the rural areas 87% of women deliver without any skilled birth attendant. There are only 24,000 nurses in the country with 160 million people, which is less than 1 nurse per 8000 population. There are also three doctors for every one nurse. The culture of care in Bangladesh is also hindered by the dominance of the medical profession, which fails to acknowledge the importance of the role of the nurse in patient care.

**Actions taken**

A college of nursing has been established over the last three years to provide opportunities for Grameen Bank borrower daughters, rural girls from disadvantaged backgrounds. The aim of the college is to provide a Diploma in Nursing Science and Midwifery, giving these young women the chance of a higher education and a career opportunity in nursing, as well as to prepare them with the skills to become leaders and change agents on behalf of women and nurses in Bangladesh, empowering other young women to make a difference in their own communities and the country at large. A bachelor’s degree in nursing will follow, and eventually Masters and PhD programmes. The college teaches in the English medium and trains students in computer skills as well as professional competencies, setting the highest standards. Decision-making and leadership skills are an integral part of the curriculum. We also use innovative teaching and learning methods including the use of simulated settings to assist in providing a strong theoretical background and best practice clinical training.

To achieve these aims it has been necessary to introduce a mentorship training scheme for nurse teachers and clinical staff. International volunteers, nurse teachers and clinical nurse specialists from
Social business innovation: Breaking the cycle of poverty and early death for young women through nursing and leadership education

different countries are invited to work alongside our teachers, helping to equip them to deliver the curriculum at an international standard, using evidenced based knowledge. The teachers also gain an understanding of the change of mind set needed to promote learning and teaching as an interactive learning process, promoting both in themselves and in their students, personal self-confidence, and lifelong learning skills.

The college has been established with a view to running it as a non-profit, non-dividend social business. This means it aims to become sustainable in the future. Students are able to take out an educational loan from the Grameen Bank, which they can pay back once they have a job, at the rate of one third of their salary. The loan has an interest rate of 5%, which is not applied until they complete their course. The loan will provide for their fees, accommodation, and uniform.

Results
Currently, the college has 138 students and 37 members of staff and has graduated 38 students all of whom either have a job or are guaranteed a job. Four of the graduated students have scholarship places to study for a BSc in nursing at Glasgow Caledonian University, one member of staff is undertaking a Post Graduate Certificate of Education, and one has been offered a PhD scholarship. Four international visits have been undertaken by academic staff visiting Japan, the Netherlands and the UK, and 15 international volunteers have visited the college annually to provide workshops and mentorship to academic and administrative staff. Partnerships with local hospitals and community settings have been put in place with supporting clinical mentorship programmes. Students, within six months, are competent in using Microsoft Word and Excel and are studying in the English medium. The college is gaining a reputation for its quality of education and is setting a recognised example to other nursing colleges within Bangladesh. To date the fee component of the college amounts to 60% of total costs, with an estimated 100% sustainability expected in 2016, when it is planned that the college will have 500+ students.

The role of PRME/sustainability principles
This social innovation incorporates the Six Principles in a number of ways. It makes a significant contribution to concerns about alleviation of poverty and social inequality.

a) Through partnership between Grameen Health Care Trust and Glasgow Caledonian University, this initiative has a clear Purpose of contributing to social and economic sustainability by providing education and training that will contribute towards the health and economic well-being of whole families and communities.

b) The values of social responsibility, inherent within nursing education, are combined with leadership development as an integral part of the curriculum.

c) Research is being carried out simultaneously to evaluate the social and economic outcomes and impact of this work.

d) Dialogue is demonstrated through a model of sustainable development using a social business approach.