

"I'm not able to thread a needle": Mina Ranu Kal, a vision camp customer in Sherpur, Bangladesh on how costs have put reading glasses out of reach

Ambika Samarthya-Howard

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Ambika Samarthya-Howard: Can she tell me her name and what happened?

Mina Ranu Kal: Mina Ranu Kal

Translator: What happened today? Did you get an eye exam?

Mina Ranu Kal: I got an eye exam. I'm not able to thread a needle [when sewing]

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: So then how come she is not leaving with the reading glasses?



Mina Ranu Kal: I am not buying because I don't have money.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: But they are still giving the reading glasses for free, right?



Translator: It's free for people who have a government card.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: Does she want to talk a little bit more about her experience with the screening and her eyes?



Mina Ranu Kal: The test felt good. I don't have any problems except when I am sewing I cannot thread the needle.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: Okay, so is she going to save some money so she can do this?



Mina Ranu Kal: I had 150 taka, but my husband just took it for himself.

Ambika Samarthya-Howard: Is she going to come back?

Mina Ranu Kal: When I have the money I will come back.

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Ambika Samarthya-Howard (she/her) is Solutions Journalism Network's Chief Innovation Officer. She strategizes on communications, metrics, impact, product and technology, leveraging platforms for the network and creating cool content. She also leads the Solutions Insights Lab, an initiative of SJN that uses targeted research and analysis to identify and interrogate what's working and what's not in a particular sector or field. She has an MFA from Columbia's film program and has been creating, teaching and writing at the intersection of storytelling and social good for two decades. She has produced content for Current TV, UNICEF, Havas, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Prism.

** This interview has been edited and condensed.*