



2012 Annual Report

ESDO seek an equitable society free from all discriminations.



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2012 Annual Report

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Message From Executive Director	01
Executive Summary	03
Economic Development	12
Char Livelihood Program (CLP)	13
Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities (SHOUHARDO II)	17
Food and Livelihood Security (FLS) Project	21
Empowering Small and Marginal Farmers to Improve Food Security	23
Transfer Modality Research Initiatives	27
Social and Economic Transformation of the Ultra Poor (SETU) Project	29
Expansion of the Cereal Systems Initiative for South Asia Component (CSISA)	31
Strengthening Poorest and Vulnerable Households Capability to Improve Food Security (SHIFT)	33
Programmed Initiative for Monga Eradication (PRIME)	37
Provision of Development Support Services to Women under the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) Programme	38
Aroni Handicrafts	39
ESDO Training & Resource Center (ETRC)	41
Social Development	44
Pre-school Program for Younger Siblings of Adivasi/Dalit Community of Thakurgaon District	45
Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh	47
ESDO Adolescent boys and girls club	53
Post Literacy and Continuing Education for Human Development PLCEHD-2 Project	55
Promotion of Rights for Advasi and Dalit Improvement Programme (PRADIP)	57
Sustainable Education through Community Participation (SECP)	61
Women and Their Children's Health (WATCH)	63
School Feeding Programme in Poverty Prone Areas	65
School Feeding Programme under Country Programme	67
Strengthen Movement to Advance Women's Rights and Gender Equality	71
Eco Pathsala and Eco College	73
ESDO Popular Theater	75
Lokayan Livelihood Museum	76

Contents

Health And Nutrition	78
Community Managed Health Care (CMHC) Project	79
Community Managed Quality Health Services (CMQHS)	83
Facilitate Quality Planning, Implementation and Monitoring of Community Support System (ComSS) under the DFID and EC supported joint GoB-UN project at Thakurgaon district	85
Sustainable Micro Sanitation Project (SMSP)	87
Improving Maternal and Child Nutrition (IMCN) Component under the Country Programme (CP)-2011-2016	91
Sanitation, Hygiene Education and Water Supply (GoB-UNICEF) Project	97
Hygiene, Sanitation and Water Supply (HYSAWA) Project	99
ESDO Community Hospital	101
Disaster and Climate Change	104
ER Program	105
Pro-poor Initiative for Disaster risk reduction and understanding Climate change for Economic development (PRODUCE) Project	109
Micro Finance	114
Micro Finance Programme: A successful strategy to fight poverty	115
Amader Bazar	117
Esdo Financial Report	118



Message From Executive Director

ESDO has just crossed the 25 years of development journey. From the inception, ESDO has been continuing its tired less journey for promoting human dignity and creating enabling environment for the excluded segment of the society for ensuring our vision “we seek an equitable society free from all discriminations”.

We believe that, through the continuous dedication, professionalism, integration and the clear vision with well defined contextual analysis and finally a good team building in between the all relevant stakeholders has successfully created many good practices and appropriate positive impacts of ESDO's activities for the target audience. Such a practice must rethink, re-conceptualize, and expand the adage “think globally, act locally, to “think globally and locally, act globally and locally”.

We, at ESDO have been working on a number of initiatives that embody the vision of sustainability in terms of financial, technological and as a result livelihood sustainability. Within the reporting year, ESDO has launched a good number of demand driven timeliness initiatives for reducing human and income poverty. Through the 25 years of development journey of ESDO, it has proven that other than peoples centered and peoples owned initiatives, it is really difficult to reduce income and human poverty. Still now in Bangladesh, exclusion is one of the major constraints for significant development. Exclusion in terms of social, political, services and attitudes not only linked with rights and governance, it also demoralized peoples vision, dream and creates a lot of visual and mental barriers. In Bangladesh, disaster is one of the major concern for sustainability but not only natural disaster, social disaster (Social disaster means exclusion process and political un-stability) is one of the serious concern for under-privileged section of the society. ESDO has concerned regarding the both issues and designed its programs and projects according to the overcome outline and creating ‘enabling environment’ and dignity for their target audience.

The reporting year 2011-2012, marks a whole range of new endeavors and many new achievements for ESDO. ESDO implemented programs in 103 upazilas under 23 districts of Bangladesh, reaching over 6.5 million poor and vulnerable people directly. We have not only stepped into new geographic areas, but have also formed new and stronger alliances and partnership with development agencies from home and abroad – all with the singular aim of serving more disadvantaged and marginal people and adorning their lives with self-belief, hopes and inspirations. We have been assisted in our efforts by the ESDO family members – whose dedication and dynamism, care and commitment have always proved vital for our success. The sincere cooperation and unstinted support of our development partners and beneficiaries also have played a pivotal role in achieving our goals.

Our sincere appreciation goes to the development partners for their financial and technical supports for ESDO's programs and projects- which play a key role in the development process for advocacy on key social and economic issues- for promoting marginalized and vulnerable groups.

I would like to congratulate Our General Committee and Executive Committee Members for their unfaltering support in achieving organizational goals.

We also extend our gratitude to all of community platforms, partners, Union Parishads and government authorities for their active support and excellent contribution and cooperation. A special thanks to all staff members of ESDO for their absolute commitment. They are the real strength of ESDO. I am proud to be associated with them.

I would like to congratulate the people who have put their time, efforts and talent in preparing this report. I hope this report will give us a proper indication of the path we should take for making our programs more successful.

Finally, congratulation has given for the program participants of ESDO- for their excellent fighting against poverty. No doubt, Bangladesh will be successfully achieved all MDG indicators through our people, the grass roots initiatives has one of the convincing indicators of golden future of Bangladesh. I salute our program participants again.

Finally, we thank you readers. And again convey our commitment for creating an equitable society free from all discriminations.



Dr. Md. Shahid Uz Zaman
Executive Director



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Eco Social Development Organization (ESDO) has been carrying out development activities in the areas of food security and livelihoods; disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, health and nutrition, education, and human rights promotion with the aim of bringing meaningful and sustainable changes to the lives of underprivileged and marginalized communities of Bangladesh since its inception in 1988. For the last two decade, ESDO has been serving with untiring efforts to improve the development situation in Bangladesh by creating livelihood opportunities for hundreds and thousands of underprivileged people. During this long span of time, ESDO has adapted with the changing situation and provided the most time-bound services especially for the poor and disadvantaged. A community focused and people centered approach has been adapted by ESDO while considering the national policy and millennium development Goals (MDGs) as its guiding principle.

Based on long experience and proven expertise of implementing development programs, ESDO has been relentless in its efforts to create scopes and opportunities for millions of people through direct inputs, capacity building, facilitation support, linkage creation, social awareness raising and advocacy initiatives. ESDO carries out multifarious program interventions in line with its vision and mission statements. One of the key strengths of ESDO is its highly skilled and dedicated workforce and the understanding and solidarity that have been developed with the project beneficiaries and stakeholders.

In the reporting period, ESDO has been highly successful in implementing its program activities towards empowering the poor and marginalized communities for improving their economic and human condition. All these activities have been implemented rigorously following the standard procedures and by maintaining complete transparency and accountability. The results are promising- ESDO has succeeded in bringing the desired changes in the society as well as in the livelihood of the wider cross sections of people.

In this reporting period, ESDO has implemented a total of 50 projects and programs in 492 slums, 657 unions under 103 upazilas covering 23 districts and benefiting 6.1 million poor and

vulnerable people. For the sake of bringing sustainable food security, skill development, livelihood development, ESDO provides demand-driven and bottom-up services, instead of supply-driven and top-down services, ensuring community participation in every step from planning, through decision-making to implementation and monitoring and follow-up as well as cost sharing by community people. By maintaining this process, ESDO has succeeded in creating a sense of ownership of the programs among the community. This approach has contributed greatly to the sustainability of the program success.

ESDO has been successfully carrying out advocacy programs having major components like gender awareness and women rights, social mobilization, legal aid services, hazardous child labour reduction movement, disaster management, social assistance to Adibashis and extreme minorities, counter trafficking etc. along with various promotional activities.

The 'Pre-school Program for Younger Siblings of Adivasi/Dalit Community' has facilitated Adivasi/Dalit Children to receive quality education as well as to be integrated into the mainstream educational system and enhanced the possibility of their unhindered socio-economic development. The 'Promotion of Rights for Advasi and Dalit Improvement Programme' (PRADIP) has succeeded in creating a favourable environment for the vulnerable ethnic minority groups where they can lead happy and prosperous life free from all kinds of discriminations. ESDO feel that, without active community involvement, no development program will be sustainable in the long run. In keeping with this realization, it puts community empowerment and community involvement in the centre of its program activities. Two ongoing projects on education, namely, 'Post Literacy and Continuing Education for Human Development PLCEHD-2' and 'Sustainable Education through Community' have focused on qualitative development in the education sector through capacity building, organizational development and creation of educational opportunities for underprivileged communities. By taking a comprehensive approach, the projects have succeeded in creating and expanding educational opportunities for the disadvantaged communities, especially children from ultra poor and vulnerable families.

ESDO has also been actively involved with facilitating legal and human rights supports to vulnerable communities through a number of projects and programs. Its 'Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh' has benefitted a large number of people by enabling them to get benefit from the village courts and thus resolve their local level disputes locally, without having to engage in long trials at higher courts. This has enabled the rural people to live in peace and harmony and have improved mutual understanding, human rights status and empowerment of disadvantaged people to a considerable extent.

ESDO's livelihood programs have broadened economic opportunities and improved food security for a large number of people. 'Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities (SHOUHARDO II) have applied a multi-pronged approach for bringing meaningful and lasting changes in the lives of the underprivileged people and strengthening their abilities to improve their livelihood in a sustainable way. Health has always been a major area of concern in ESDO's agenda. ESDO has been engaged in health care and strengthening of health facilities in the rural and marginal areas of the country. Its 'Community Managed Health Care (CMHC) Project', 'Community Managed Quality Health Services (CMQHS)

and 'Sustainable Micro Sanitation Project (SMSP)' have facilitated disadvantaged and marginalized communities to empower themselves for receiving better health care and sanitation services. Because of the inherent weaknesses of the healthcare infrastructure in the rural areas of Bangladesh, many rural and disadvantaged people find it very hard to get even the most basic health facilities. Because of ESDO's health and sanitation activities, vulnerable people have been able to meet their health care needs at the local level. This has enabled them to improve their livelihood status considerably. By focusing on community support and self-help, projects like 'Provide Support to Facilitate Quality Planning, Implementation and Monitoring of Community Support System (ComSS)', have played a significant role towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and substantially improved the standard of living of the vulnerable communities by reducing the under-five mortality rate and Infant mortality rate.

Considering the health implications and requirement of good nutritional status, ESDO set forth its health, nutrition and environmental development program. ESDO provided various types of reproductive, child and general health services by operating a total of 100 satellite and static clinics through Health Pilot Program (HPO), Community Managed Health Care Initiative (CMHCI), ESDO Community Hospital (ECH) and Hazardous Child Labour Reduction Movement (HCLRM). Through these projects ESDO is contributing towards improving the health and nutrition status of the people within the intervention areas through NMR / MMR reduction, family planning, immunization, TBA training, distribution of Vitamin A capsule, Primary health care services, WATSAN, health education etc. Under these projects, 81,000 community people have so far been benefited. Being aware about the risk factors during delivery and pregnancy, 98% delivery cases were done safely by ESDO's qualified persons. Besides, more than 62% deliveries was done by ESDO's trained TBAs. On the other hand, a total of 210,000 children under one year were immunized under ESDO's health intervention. In family planning services, ESDO provided various types of clinical and non-clinical services to its beneficiaries. ESDO provided various types of safe water, sanitation and hygiene education services under the 'Advancing Sustainable Environmental Health (ASEH)', 'Arsenic Mitigation Programme', 'Sanitation, Hygiene and Water Supply' projects. Through these projects, ESDO is contributing towards improving the safe water, sanitation and hygiene education of the people within the intervention areas. A total of 3,705,275 community people have so far been benefited. Under the safe water and sanitation programs, 163,090 tube-wells were screened for arsenic mitigation and 17,682 tube-wells and 60,320 sanitary latrines were installed. More than 90% people have become aware of hygiene education.

ESDO has been implementing various activities to mitigate the adverse effects of disasters as well as to increase the resilience of people most vulnerable to environmental degradation and various disasters. ESDO's 'ER Program' and PRODUCE Project' have facilitated the vulnerable people for improving their livelihood, by increasing their knowledge and capacity to face disaster effectively. With the help of diversified activities, these program initiatives have empowered rural people, local government bodies and local actors to achieve critical competence for ensuring sustainable development by successfully adapting to the impacts of climate change. These program interventions have helped innumerable people to improve their livelihood in the face of disaster risks, adverse impacts and vulnerabilities. ESDO's 'Food and Livelihood Security Project' is focused on increasing production and consumption of

nutritious food by the vulnerable people, improving their household income and livelihood, increasing revenues and productivity for marginal farmers and sharecroppers and enhancing social inclusion and community coherence of the disadvantaged people.

ESDO's 'Adolescent Boys and Girls Club' project has succeeded in creating critical consciousness among adolescent boys and girls about social equity and a gender-sensitive positive mindset. Main focus of this project is to empower the girl children to take part in the mainstream development process and bring about sustainable social development. Through the 'Transfer Modality Research Initiatives' project, ESDO has been striving to increase the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of different social safety net transfer modalities for ultra poor households with regard to household income, household food security, child nutrition, etc. In addition, ESDO has contributed to reducing and eliminating hazardous child labour through its 'Child Labour Elimination Action Network (CLEAN)' network, a platform of like-minded NGOs working to improve child rights situation by eliminating child labour in the northwest districts of Bangladesh.

ESDO initiated formation of groups through a systematic empowerment of the people of a certain area to achieve the set goals. Under micro finance programme, up to November 2012, a total of 8,665 groups have been formed comprising 109,658 Members. A total of Tk. 7,830,615,000 was disbursed during this period.

A total of 1,252 farmers groups were formed consisting of 44,133 farmers. All farmer members received different types of training and 33,844 farmers were benefited from the supply of inputs and technical assistance. A total amount of 777,107,000 Tk. was disbursed as loan among 33,844 farmers for improving their farm productivity. A total of Tk. 1,442,920,900 was disbursed among 11,576 women beneficiaries to invest in poultry and livestock development. ESDO has also been providing technical assistance, quality breed and marketing linkage. Moreover, a total of 850,000 poultry birds and about 156,000 cattle were vaccinated during the period.

ESDO Training & Resources Centre (ETRC) organized a whole range of training programs considering the category and capability of the recipients. During the period, 203,572 beneficiaries received different types of training. ETRC is well equipped with all sorts of facilities such as OHP, multimedia projector, sound system and many modules. A group of experienced and dedicated trainers have been providing continuous services to the beneficiaries in accordance with ETRC's own training plan. Due to changing context of the development sectors as well as the emerging needs, ESDO provided different types of trainings to its staff. The outcomes of the staff development initiative resulted in more skilled and efficient workforce to effective programme planning, implementation, programme and organizational management.

ESDO believes that collaboration and collective efforts are essential for bringing sustainable and qualitative changes in the lives of the underprivileged people. In line with this understanding, ESDO has built up a strong network with GOs and NGOs, international partners, social activists, human rights activists, development workers and enthusiasts, cultural activists, educationists, health activists etc. over the years. One of the main reasons for ESDO's success in

carrying out pro-poor development activities is this network of development partners which has substantially improved ESDO's capacity for designing and implementing its development programs.

ESDO follows time-tested M&E systems for making its activities focused, transparent, effective and result-oriented. ESDO's transparent financial system and strict compliance with donors' requirements have helped it immensely in fulfilling the project and program objectives. ESDO maintains both accruals, cash basis accounting, and follow the double entry accounting system. It keeps accounts both manually and electronically. Monthly and quarterly reporting systems are followed rigorously. ESDO is able to produce and provide report to the donor as per their requirements. Every component and sub-component of ESDO program are monitored continuously and necessary steps are taken to ensure smooth implementation of these programs. ESDO regularly evaluates its programs and projects through different period. Monitoring and evaluations are being taken on a regular basis to adjust and/or develop effective program planning. For ensuring qualitative and quantitative accountability, all project activities of ESDO are periodically audited by ESDO's Internal Audit Team. A professional group regularly audited ESDO's entire projects under the direct supervision of the Executive Director. As per audit findings, the concerned sectoral coordinators ensure meeting-up the lacking or shortfall within required period.

ESDO believes that efficient staff is a significant parameter of organizational strength. ESDO consider them as the most valuable resources. At present, 3,885 staff are working with ESDO, among them 1,897 are male and 1,988 are female. Of the total staff, 105 are working in the central office and the rest 3,780 are working under the regional and branch offices.

Vision

ESDO seek an equitable society free from all discriminations.

Mission

Reduction in income and human poverty of the people in ESDO's working area through livelihoods, environmental justice, education, health & nutrition and governance initiatives/programs. ESDO firmly believes and is actively involved in promoting human rights, dignity and gender equality through people's social, economical, political and human capacity building. Women in general and children are the core and central focus of its activities. Strengthening the organizational capacity carries importance to ensure quality of its services. Extending its services to the disadvantaged and vulnerable extreme poor is its main manifesto.

Programming Goal

The goal of ESDO program is to eradicate extreme poverty and improve the quality of life of the disadvantaged and vulnerable poor people (especially women and children).

Core values of ESDO programming

ESDO maintains the following core values in planning and implementation of programming:

- Transparency
- Accountability
- Quality of services
- Women empowerment
- Welfare of the marginal people
- Honesty
- Participation
- Responsiveness
- Commitment
- Openness
- Social equality
- 'Children First'

Development Partners

UNICEF, World Food Programme (WFP), WFP-IFPRI, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Labour Organization (ILO), European Union/SRDI-GoB, European Union/Directorate of Women Affairs-GOB, European Union/CARE-Bangladesh, PLAN-Bangladesh, CARE-Bangladesh/USAID, HEKS-Switzerland, Max Foundation-Netherland, DFID-Maxwell Stamp/PLC, Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), Bangladesh NGO Foundation, Local Government Engineering Department-GOB, Directorate of Health-GOB, Water Aid, Directorate of Women Affairs-GOB, Directorate of Primary Education-GOB, Embassy of Japan, UCEP-Bangladesh, Steps Towards Development (STD).

Recognition

- ESDO awarded by Govt. of Peoples Republic of Bangladesh as a "Best Organization in Non-Formal Education Sector-1997".
- ESDO awarded by Citibank N.A. (USA) as a "Best Microfinance Institution of the year-2006".

ESDO's Working Area

Sl. No.	Name of district	No. of Upazila	Name of Upazila
01	Thakurgaon	05	Thakurgaon Sadar, Pirganj, Baliadangi, Haripur and Ranishankail
02	Panchagarh	05	Panchagarh Sadar, Tetulia, Debiganj, Atowari and Boda
03	Dinajpur	09	Dinajpur Sadar, Birganj, Kaharole, Bochaganj, Fulbari, Hakimpur, Birampur, Birol, and Parbotipur
04	Rangpur	07	Rangpur Sadar, Mithapukur, Gangachara, Badargonj, Pirgonj, Kaunia and Pargacha
05	Gaibandha	07	Gaibandha Sadar, Sadullahpur, Fulchari, Sundarganj, Shaghata, Gobindaganj and Palashbari
06	Bogra	01	Bogra Sadar
07	Nilphamari	05	Nilphamari Sadar, Domar, Saidpur, Kishoregonj and Dimla
08	Joypurhat	02.	Akkelpur, Khetlal
09	Lalmonirhat	05	Lalmonirhat Sadar, Hatibandha, Patgram, Aditmary, and Kaliganj
10	Kurigram	05	Kurigram Sadar, Ulipur, Fulbari, Nagessory, Rajarhat
11	Rajshahi	09	Bagha, Bagmara, Charghat, Mohanpur, Puthia, Tanore, Paba and Godagari
12	Natore	06	Natore Sadar, Bagatipara, Baraigram, Gurudashpur, Lalpur, and Singra
13	Chapai Nawabganj	05	Chapai Nawabganj Sadar, Shibganj, Gomstapur, Nachole and Bholahat
14	Sirajganj	09	Sirajganj Sadar, Ullapara, Kazipur, Tarash, Belkuchi, Chowhali, Royganj, Shahjadpur and Kamarkhand
15	Jamalpur	07	Jamalpur Sadar, Dewanganj, Sarishabari, Melandha, Bokshiganj, Islampur and Mathergonj
16	Dhaka	06	Dhaka City Corporation
17	Barishal	02	Bakergonj and Mehendigonj
18	Potuakhali	01	Bowphal
19	Gopalganj	02	Kotalipara, Tungipara
20	Bhola	01	Charfashion
21.	Pirozpur	01	Bhandaria
22.	Khulna	01	Dacop, Koira
23.	Bagherhat	01	Fakirhat
Total	23	103	

Organizational Decision Making Structure

A General Body governs ESDO. General Body elects a 7-member Executive Committee (EC). EC provides policy guidelines. The Member Secretary of the EC guides the team/staff members in order to accomplish the day to day activities, as Executive Director of the organization. As member secretary of the organization, Executive Director organizes monthly meeting and all agendas including problems of the participants which are collected from field level are discussed in the meeting and the executive committee take decision on behalf of organization and send to the field. In this process, two way techniques (Bottom to up and Up to Bottom) are being maintained in decision making. ESDO organizes Annual General Meeting in each financial year, with the participation of all the members of the General Body. As the Executive Committee is accountable to the general body, all agenda of the year are discussed in this meeting. All sectoral heads on behalf of the Executive Director present their yearly progress reports and provide answers to the General Body, if required. Yearly budget is also reviewed and budget for the next year is approved in the AGM. Various stakeholders including the public representatives, members of civil society, media people, officers of the Directorate of Social Welfare, members of the beneficiaries group, GO- NGO personnel, ESDO staff, etc. also participate in the AGM.

List of ESDO'S Executive

Sl No	Name	Designation	Address	Occupation
01.	Md. Shafiqul Islam	Chairman	Hazipara, Thakurgaon-5100; Phone: +88-0561-61134; Mobile: 0172-4044562	Teaching
02.	Mrs. Nazma Akther	Vice Chairman	32, Jorpur Len, Tipu Sultan Road, Dhaka-1100; Phone: +88-02-7248469, Mobile: +8801911033437	Teaching
03.	Babu Romesh Chandra Sen	Member	Honorable Minister, Ministry of Water Resources, Government of Bangladesh; House # 24, Baily Road, Dhaka. Tel: +8802-9341516 Mobile: +88-1740839080	Social Worker
04.	Begum Sereza Banu	Member (Finance)	Islam Nagar, Thakurgaon Road Thakurgaon, Mobile: +88-01744-777227	Social Worker
05.	Mrs. Momotaz Parveen	Member	Sarkerpara, Thakurgaon-5100, Mobile: +88-01719541912	Teaching
06.	Principal Md. Khalilur Rahman	Member	Hajipara, Thakurgaon-5100, Mobile: +88-01720803202	Retired Principal
07.	Dr. Md. Shahid Uz Zaman	Member Secretary & Executive Director	Collegepara, Thakurgaon Phone: +88-0561-52149, (Office), Fax: +88-0561-61599, Mobile: +88-0173-210488	Executive Director, ESDO





Economic Development

Char Livelihood Program (CLP)

Project duration: 1st October, 2011 to 30 June, 2013

Project location: Dewanganj, Jamalpur



A country crossed by hundreds of rivers, Bangladesh has innumerable chars (strips of sandy lands rising out of river-beds) in almost every part of the country. In most cases, the lives of the people living in chars are characterized by a constant struggle against natural calamities, poverty and hardship. In view of this, ESDO has been implementing the chars Livelihoods Programme (CLP) to eliminate extreme poverty on the island chars of northwestern Bangladesh. The households covered under this project receive a focused package of assets and support aimed at improving their socio-economic condition. The project has been implemented in the Dewanganj upazilla of Jamalpur district with support from the Department for International Development (DFID), UK. One of the main focuses of the program is to create livelihood opportunities, particularly for the women-headed households and to build and improve partnerships to facilitate enterprise development.



Goal

To improve the livelihoods, incomes and food security of at least one million extremely poor and vulnerable women, children and men living on riverine chars islands of northwestern Bangladesh.

Objectives

- **Social Development (SD):** To make char people knowledgeable and aware so that they are able to participate in development activities, better able to influence the local and central policy making decisions in favour of them and able to claim and enjoy their rights in relation to different types of services and opportunities through building effective linkage and relationship with providing agencies.
- **Village Savings and Loan (VSL):** To provide 'a safe place to save' to the core and non-core participant households of CLP and thus to encourage them to adopt the habit of saving.
- **Health:** Integrating and implementing primary health care and family planning project interventions at the community level towards sustainable improvement in the maternal health, Child health, family planning and nutrition of targeted vulnerable households on the designated island char villages. Ensure referral linkages for easy access to GOB-NGO and private sector clinics/hospitals; and improving health seeking behavior and services by the extreme poor people of island chars.
- **Livelihoods:** To improve livelihood status of the most vulnerable char dwellers through increasing income by providing productive assets and IGA training.
- **Infrastructure:** To reduce the vulnerability of the char dwellers from the shocks of flooding and health hazards implement a) Plinth Raising, b) Water, and c) sanitation in the island chars.

Project highlights

- Established Village Development Committees (VDCs) and formed community groups to eradicate extreme poverty in a collective manner.
- 417 sanitary latrines were installed to improve hygiene situation.
- 7 Early-marriages were stopped through motivation and collective efforts.
- 2 villages were made open defecation free through sensitization.
- 525 participants received trainings on VSL (1-9 modules).
- Shares amounting to BDT 3, 32,000 were bought on VSL project.
- Loans amounting to BDT 3, 10,500 were distributed on VSL project.
- 84 Char Shahthya Kendras were operated and 16 satellite clinics were operated to provide health services (maternal health service was extended to 235 women, child health services were provided to 348 children, adult health services were provided to 943 persons, family planning services were provided to 86 persons and nutrition services were provided to 50 persons, and 49 patients received referral services) on PHC-FP project.
- 5 HFL pillars were installed and 411 households' plinths were raised.
- Capacity development and technical support were provided to 430 participants to improve agricultural productivity
- 430 participants received income support stipend for 18 months and 430 participants receive asset maintenance stipend for 6 months.

- 430 compost sheds, 430 vegetable gardens, 1290 seed preservation pots were distributed.
- 430 participants received orientation support on milk, poultry and fodder.
- 430 CPHH's were received different training on market development.
- 32 model farmers were received training on poultry rearing and 32 model poultry house were established.

CASE STUDY

CLP changes Dalimon's life for the better

The district of Jamalpur is regularly affected by a range of natural disasters like floods, river erosions, cold-waves, etc. The village of Char Bahadurabad is situated in the Dewanganj upazilla of Jamalpur district, which is home to a large number of landless people. These people lost their homes at the hands of natural calamities like river erosion and floods and have migrated to Char Bahadurabad. Dalimon is one of the hundreds of people who have migrated to Char Bahadurabad after losing their ancestral homes. She lives with her two grandsons and supports the family by working as housemaid. The meager income she earns is quite insufficient to support the family of three and, because of extreme poverty, they have to starve sometimes. However, Dalimon saw a ray of hope when the Chars Livelihood Program (CLP) of ESDO started in Char Bahadurabad. She came to know about the project, but was skeptical about its utility for people like her because she thought that she will have to pay money to UP officials to be enlisted as a beneficiary of the program. However, to her amazement, she was enlisted as a participant by the CLP staff. Dalimon's ramshackle house stood on a very low land, which was always at the risk of being submerged by flood water. CLP Infrastructure Development Project raised the plinth level of the house and helped her make a garden on the raised land. Dalimon received various types of seeds from ESDO and she planted the seeds in her garden. Soon, the garden became full of fresh vegetables which filled Dalimon's heart with joy. She sold the vegetables after keeping some for the family. She made a good profit from the sale. Afterwards, Dalimon received BDT 16,000 from the CLP for asset purchase. She took lease of 16 decimals of land and cultivated crops. She earned around BDT 6,000 by selling the crops in the first season and BDT 6500 in the second year. She is also making savings through the VSL project. From the social trainings received from CLP staff, Dalimon learnt many new things on health, nutrition, family planning, social safety and the evils of early marriage, dowry, etc. She shares this information with her neighbours and tries to motivate them on these issues. Dalimon thinks that, being a part of the CLP has been a turning point in her life. She is thankful to ESDO for implementing the project in her area.

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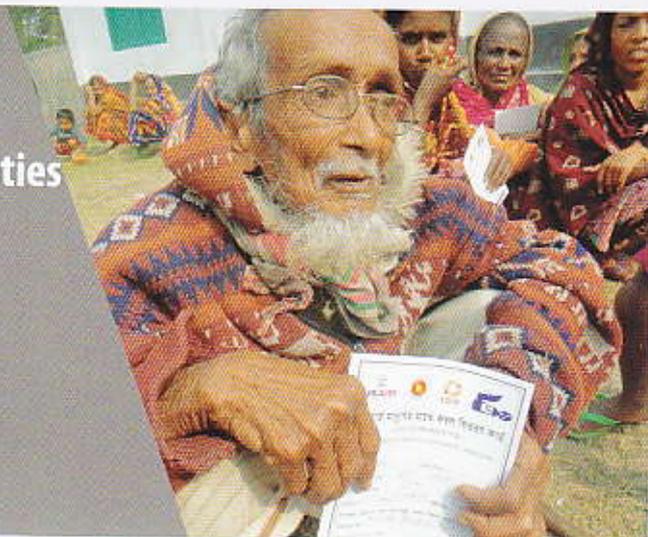


Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities (SHOUHARDO II)

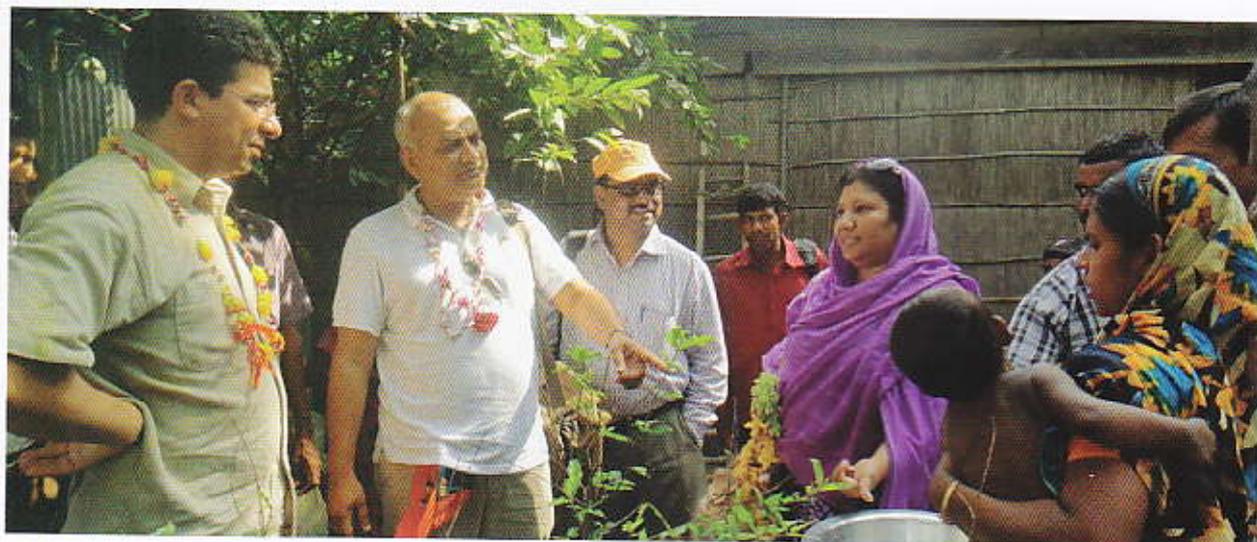
Project duration: March 2011 to till now

Project location: Kazipur upazilla of Sirajganj district.

Donor agency: USAID



One of the largest food security programs funded by the USAID, "Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities (SHOUHARDO II)" has been striving to ensure comprehensive livelihood development of the vulnerable people through self-help and food security. ESDO has been implementing this program in 95 villages of Kazipur Upazila under Sirajganj district since March 2011 with the experiences and lessons of the previous SHOUHARDO Program. ESDO aims to transform the lives of 25,761 Poor and Extreme Poor (PEP) households of which EP household is 6648 (26% HH) and poor household is 19113 (74% HH). Beside these 95 villages, ESDO covered 16 villages through a PM2A (Prevention of Malnutrition under two approach) approach on a pilot basis covering a total of 2197 HHs (only for ration purposes). At present, the activities of the FY'12 is undergoing as per COG (Core Occupational Group) Plan. In the areas covered by the program, a whole range of pro-poor development activities are being carried out with an aim to facilitate the targeted communities to ensure their food security and come out of poverty. A multi-pronged approach comprising awareness raising, direct input support, capacity building and linkage development, SHOUHARDO II has succeeded in bringing meaningful and lasting changes in the lives of the beneficiaries and has strengthened their abilities to improve their livelihood in a sustainable way.



Goal

Transform the lives of 370,000 Poor and Extreme Poor (PEP) households in 11 of the poorest and most marginalized districts in Bangladesh by reducing their vulnerability to food insecurity

Strategic objectives

- S01: "Availability of" and "access to" nutritious foods enhanced and protected for 370,000 PEP households
- S02: Improved health, hygiene and nutrition status of 281,000 children under 2 years of age
- S03: PEP women and adolescent girls empowered in their families, communities, and Union Parishad
- S04: Local elected bodies and government service provider's responsiveness and accountability to the PEP increased
- S05: Targeted community members and government institutions are better prepared for, mitigate, and respond to disasters and adapt to climate change

Project highlights

- Capacity development of 9338 Poor and Extreme Poor (PEP) were done and input distributions, including 2296 on agriculture, 369 of fish and 3475 on IGA) have been conducted.
- 22 ECCD centers and 37 EKATA centers have been established.
- 12 VAW committees have been formed.
- VDC leadership training in all 95 villages has been completed.
- Capacity development of UDMC and UDV completed.
- Workshops and social mobilization with different stakeholders have been organized for developing social safety net and reduction of domestic violence against women.
- Arsenic tests on 14,251 tube wells have been completed.
- International Women's Day, International Day for Disaster Reduction, NDPD (National Disaster Preparedness Day) and Global Hand washing Days were observed.
- Communities' access to WASH services have been improved through installation of tube wells and latrines.
- Supplementary food supports were provided to 4127 lactating & pregnant mothers.



The spirit of self-help builds a road

Kunkunia is one the remotest village of Maijbari Union under Kazipur Upazila in Sirajganj district. The distance between Kazipur upazilla headquarters and Kunkunia is five kilometers. One poorly built cutcha road connects the village with Kazipur. There are about 1888 households in Kunkunia, of whom 80% are depending on agriculture for their living. Under the SHOUHARDO II program, a whole range of development activities are being implemented in the village, which has brought about many positive changes in the lives of the community. In May 2011, as a part of VDC formation and CAP preparation, Nishat Yesmin, a Field Facilitation Officer from ESDO conducted a session, where she facilitated the community people on finding out solutions to their livelihood problems with the help of PRA tools. Upon realizing the nature and scopes of their problems, the community people devised action plans for achieving various medium and long term benefits. Among the seven identified problems, the villagers identified problem of communication as the most immediate problem and planned to construct a 250-meter long road, which would connect their village to the neighboring areas. At first, they formed a committee consisting of 11 villagers which was made responsible for overall management of the construction work. They decided to build the road using local resources. They calculated how many rings, trees, construction materials and manpower will be needed to finish the job. They followed a well-thought out plan and collected all the necessary materials from the local community. Then the construction work began and a total of 580 persons (300 female and 280 male) took part in the road construction work. They worked for nine hours at a stretch and completed the road. The local union parishad provided some rings which they used in the road. The whole work was done without paying any money to the workers.

The construction of the road is a success story of self-help and community mobilization. It shows that, with determination and hard work, any seemingly impossible task could be performed, and if it means the benefit of a whole community, it brings a lot of satisfaction for everybody involved.





Food and Livelihood Security (FLS) Project

Project duration: February 2012 – April 2014

Project location: Chapainawabganj Sadar, Shibganj, Gomostapur, Nachole and Bholahat upazilas of Chapainawabganj district.



Food security is inextricably linked with human development. By improving food security and reducing income poverty of the ultra poor people, their living standard as well as the quality of life could be substantially improved, which, in its turn, would contribute greatly in the sustainable socio-economic development of the country. In view of this, the project entitled 'Food and Livelihood Security' (FLS) project is being implemented by ESDO in the northwest region of the country. Upon completion, the project is expected to increase production and consumption of nutritious food by the targeted beneficiaries, their improved household income and livelihood, improved revenues and productivity for the selected marginal farmers and sharecroppers and increased social inclusion and community coherence of the targeted beneficiaries.

Overall Objectives

The overall objective is to improve food security and reduce income poverty for the rural ultra poor and marginal farmers' households in the Northwest Bangladesh.

Specific Objectives

The specific objective is to improve the food and nutrition security for the 12,800 ultra poor women headed households and 7,680 marginal and / or share cropper including ethnic minorities' households.

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Empowering Small and Marginal Farmers to Improve Food Security

Project duration: 2010 to 2013

Project location: Thakurgaon, Nilphamari, Panchagarh and Dinajpur districts.

Donor agency: EU and the Government of Bangladesh.



A large number of people of Bangladesh, especially people belonging to the poor and ultra poor families suffer constantly from food insecurity. As a result, hunger, hardship and endless misery have been some of the distinguishing features of life for these people. In order to address the problem of food insecurity, ESDO has undertaken the 'Empowering Small and Marginal Farmers to Improve Food Security' project which aims at empowering the underprivileged people living in the rural areas through a combination of skill development, linkage creation, networking, and awareness raising and technology and knowledge transfer. In the reporting period, ESDO has carried out wide-ranging activities which have brought about significant changes in the lives of the targeted communities in terms of ensuring food security and building their capacity for creating more livelihood options and opportunities for



Objectives

The main objective of the project is to contribute in improving food security of the small and marginal farm households of the target area.

Specific objectives

- To empower targeted small and marginal farm households by building their knowledge and skills on environment friendly farming and facilitating functional linkages with resource organizations such as DAE and SRDI so that they become able to manage soil sustainable, diversify crop production, increase crop yields and improve accessibility to nutritious food for women and children.
- To contribute to effective management of Food Security-Soil Fertility Component (FS-SFC) by participating in national workshop, implementing M&E at enhanced documenting and disseminating learning and best practices and promoting EU visibility.

Project highlights

- 5250 learning sessions have been completed for the target beneficiaries.
- Vegetable seeds and other agricultural inputs have been distributed among 3541 persons.
- 1193 agricultural equipment including power tiller, shallow machine, spray machine, drum seeders, weeder, power winner, power rice threshers and paddle threshers distributed among the targeted people.
- 14,000 air tight super bags and seed preserver bags distributed among the targeted people.
- Fertilizer Recommendations Cards were distributed among 3,773 people.
- 14 Agricultural Fairs were organized.
- 75 Farmers' Field Days observed.
- 6 bio-villages were set up.
- 11 seed banks were established.
- 388 Local Resource Farmers' trainings on soil fertility were organized.
- 388 Local Resource farmers (LRF) training on crop diversification and rotation were organized.



The people of Shindur Pindi inspire others to use compost

Shindur Pindi, a village of Baliadangi Upazilla under Dhontola Union is located about 20 kilometers away from Thakurgaon district headquarters. Most of the people (about 90%) of Shindur Pindi depend on agriculture. But they were applying excessive chemical fertilizer and small amount of organic fertilizer in their agricultural lands for crop or vegetable production. As a result of less use of organic fertilizer, the content of organic matter in their soil had been deteriorating for a long time and eventually reached to 1-1.5%, but the optimum level of organic matter content in the soil is 5%. Consequently, the production of crops was hampered in every season. For this reason, farmers of this area lagged behind those in the neighboring areas.

ESDO has been implementing Food Security Program 2006, Soil Fertility Component Project in four districts of Piedmont Plain Areas of Bangladesh- Thakurgaon, Nilphamari, Panchagarh and Dinajpur since July 2010 with financial support from EU and Government of Bangladesh. With an aim to reduce the application of chemical fertilizers, a range of program activities were carried out under this program. From the training and discussion programs two farmers of Shindur Pindi learned how to produce and use compost. They applied this knowledge and produced compost at their household. Molin Chandra is one of the farmers. He informed that, although he produced 520 kilograms of paddy last year, this year, the production has increased to 640 kilograms. Encouraged by this example, now more and more villagers are showing interest on the use of organic fertilizer. Farmers Fields Day (FFD) is also regularly observed in the village. As a result, the farmers of the village are using organic fertilizer not only for the production of paddy, but also for wheat, chili and maize as well as different vegetables. At the same time, dependence on chemical fertilizer has also been decreasing day by day. Besides, farmers are now testing their soil at their own interest and applying fertilizers according to the Fertilizer Recommendation Card. At present, almost 100% of the households are covered by compost plant and they are using the fertilizer in their paddy field and vegetable land. This has encouraged the villagers from the neighboring villages to set up compost plants and produce composts.



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Transfer Modality Research Initiatives

Project duration: 15 March – 30 June 2012

Project location: Fulbari, Rajarhat, Gongachara, Pirgacha and Pirganj (Rangpur and Kurigram districts), Dacope (Khulna district), Fakirhat (Bagerhat district), Bhandaria (Pirojpur district), Charfashion (Bhola district) and Bauphal (Patuakhail district).



The Transfer Modality Research Project aims to examine the impacts of different transfer modalities on household income, food security and child nutrition. The programme focuses on generating definitive evidences which may potentially contribute to policy decisions on strengthening and streamlining the social safety net system in Bangladesh. The five different transfer modalities examined in the programme are (i) food; (ii) cash; (iii) food + cash; (iv) nutrition behaviour change communication + food (v) nutrition behaviour change communication + cash. Covering a period of 12 months implementation phase, the project uses a combination of methods for investigating the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of five different social safety net transfer modalities for ultra poor households with regard to household income, household food security, child nutrition, etc.

Objectives

- i) Determine, using rigorous impact evaluation designs, the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of five different social safety net transfer modalities for ultra poor households with regard to the following key outcomes:
 - Household Income
 - Household food security (both in terms of quantity and quality of food)
 - Child nutrition
- ii) Assess the efficacy of proxy means targeting of ultra poor households at operational level.
- iii) Evaluate the implementation processes of the different transfer modalities based on the perception of beneficiaries and their social and economic environment.

Project highlights

- A total of 202,5465 MT foods were received and 134,9803 MT was distributed among 2500 project participants.
- A total of BDT 9,348,728 was received and BDT 5,985,750 was distributed among 2500 project participants.
- 2000 posters, 100 picture manuals and 125 set flash cards were brought out as nutrition educational materials.

- 59 Community Nutrition Center (CNCs) for BCC sessions equipped with necessary support materials were established.
- CNWs conducted 2 sessions of Direct Group (card holders) meetings, 8 sessions of Family Influential Group meetings and 2 sessions of Community Elite Group meetings. They also conducted personal counseling sessions and home visits twice a month.

CASE STUDY

Beauty finds a way to fulfill her dreams

Gangachara union of Gangachara upazilla in Rangpur district stands on the river Tista, one of the main rivers of the country. Being a low-lying area, Gangachara is submerged by river water every year, during the onset of monsoon. While, during the summer, the crop fields are severely affected as a result of lingering draughts. The vast majority of the people of Gangachara suffer constantly as a result of these extreme climatic conditions. Although there have been some efforts both from government and non-government organizations to address these problems, they were not adequate to mitigate the adverse impacts of these natural calamities. World Food Programme (WFP), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Bangladesh Government jointly undertook a Transfer Modality Research initiative to examine the impacts of different transfer modalities on household income, food security and child nutrition.

Beauty is one of the 260 participants of the project from Gangachara upazilla. She is from an ultra poor family from the village of Vutka under Gangachara union. Her husband Rubel is a landless agricultural laborer who worked in other people's fields. He earned around 130-150 Taka a day if he could manage himself a job, but remained workless for long stretches of time. That made the family quite vulnerable in terms of ensuring food security. However, it all changed when Beauty received a Food + Cash card under the TMR Initiative. Through this card she received monthly 15 kg rice, 1 kilogram pulse, 1 liter vegetable oil and 750 taka (BDT). Now she can fulfill her basic food demands for 10 to 12 days from this entitlement. The remaining days could be covered by her husband's income. This project has come as a boon for Beauty and her family. From two months cash entitlements, she has bought a goat. Her days of hunger and misery are becoming a thing of the past. Now she dreams of building a house which will not be blown away by a storm. She has already started saving money for this purpose. Beauty believes that, with hard work and determination, she can fulfill this dream as well.

Social and Economic Transformation of the Ultra Poor (SETU) Project

Development partner: DFID and GoB (SHIREE), with support from CARE Bangladesh

Project area: Aditmari and Kaliganj Upazilas of Lalmonirhat district

Project period: March 2009 to February 2012



The large majority ultra poor people of Bangladesh are deprived of even the most basic facilities and are forced to live a life full of misery and hardship. ESDO has been implementing the Social and Economic Transformation of the Ultra Poor (SETU) project over the last three years with an aim to build capacity of the ultra poor people to bring positive and lasting changes in their livelihood and also to facilitate the local government bodies and other stakeholders for supporting the efforts of the ultra poor people towards social, economic and political empowerment leading to improved livelihood outcomes. So far, the project activities have achieved considerable success in building the capacity of the ultra poor and creating an enabling environment for their further development.

Goal

To achieve the MDG Target 1 and 2 of the Government of Bangladesh on income poverty reduction and hunger by 2015.

Objective

To empower 20,000 (ESDO targeting 2083) extreme poor households in Northwest Bangladesh to collectively address the causes of their economic, social and political exclusion that keep them in extreme poverty.

Project highlights

- Direct input support has been given to 1040 participants.
- 23 Economic Assessment sessions held with the participation of businessmen, Para Unnayan Committee members, NL and NL advisers at the Ward level. The main objectives of these sessions were assessing the business status of the participants, empower PUCs, sharing business processes, etc.

- In the reporting period, 576 beneficiaries received input support worth Taka 2,347,583 at community level. According to the last assessment, beneficiaries are earning 200 Taka on average per month.
- Based on primary and secondary information, 52 new para histories have been collected.
- 50 social mappings have been completed at 50 new communities through participatory discussion sessions.
- 50 new paras/communities have achieved 100% sanitation through community led total sanitation initiative.
- 50 well-being analysis have been completed on 50 new communities through participatory discussion sessions.
- 50 seasonal calendars have been prepared at 50 new communities through participatory discussion sessions. The community people of these 50 paras have started savings for munga mitigation.
- 4 Pot analyses have been conducted through participatory discussion.



Expansion of the Cereal Systems Initiative for South Asia Component (CSISA)

Development partner: The World Fish Center

Project area: Kurigram and Dinajpur districts.

Project period: February 2011 to January 2012



The World Fish Center, together with its partners, is managing the project Expansion of Cereal System Initiative for South Asia (CSISA-BD) in Bangladesh which works to increase farm household income and productivity, principally focusing on improved cereal cropping systems but also including fish and other high value agricultural opportunities. The project aims to boost the validation, adaptation and deployment of improved varieties and crop management technologies. CSISA-BD also endeavors to place technologies in the context of markets, risk and other barriers that, without complementary strategies, can constrain advances in production and improvements in livelihoods. To ensure that farmers have better access to timely and accurate information, capacity building among front-line extension agents and service providers is also a prime objective of CSISA-BD. Adaptive research complements these strategies by refining technologies for local biophysical and socioeconomic circumstances, and also identifying and evaluating emerging technologies to improve scope for future impact. ESDO has been implementing CSISA-BD project with the financial support from WorldFish Center since December 2011.

Project highlights

- 40 client groups were selected and formed.
- Assistance was provided in organizing farmers training.
- Participatory demo ponds were selected.
- Regular follow up visits to the clients were made.
- Farmers Field Days were organized.
- Regular monitoring and supervision of the program was done.

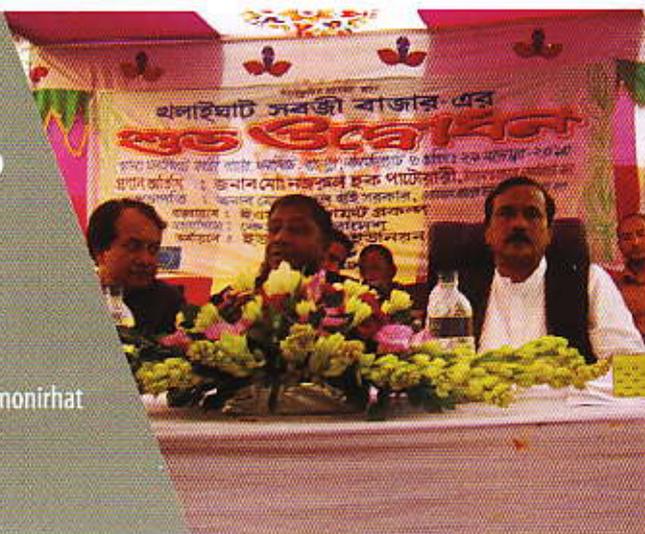


Strengthening Poorest and Vulnerable Households Capability to Improve Food Security (SHIFT)

Development partner: European Union, with support from CARE Bangladesh

Project area: Lalmonirhat Sadar and Aditmari Upazilas (Lalmonirhat district)

Project period: 1 February 2010 – 15 September 2011



Soaring prices and unavailability of essential food items have contributed in the deepening of poverty and hunger among the underprivileged and vulnerable people of Bangladesh. Strengthening Poorest and Vulnerable Households Capability to Improve Food Security (SHIFT) project aimed at ensuring food security of the ultra poor people in some selected localities in northern Bangladesh. The project primarily focused on two determinants of food security - availability of and access to food. ESDO implemented the project in selective areas of Lalmonirhat district. With a combination of direct inputs, linkage creation and capacity building, the project contributed significantly in the reduction of poverty and hunger for the most vulnerable households and also in bringing them out of the cycle of poverty.

Overall objective

To contribute to the reduction of poverty and hunger for the poorest and most vulnerable households in the Northwest of Bangladesh.

Specific Objective

To improve local facilities and to empower and engage 6,552 targeted households in agricultural productivity, income and employment towards improving their basic food needs in the districts of Lalmonirhat.

Project highlights

After receiving training, project beneficiaries engaged in production and marketing of High Economic Valued (HEV) crops.

- 46 women received training and engaged in nursery development and earned average Tk.3000-5000 by marketing saplings.
- 10 male participants received training and engaged in ground nut production and Marketing, 27 (F-10, M-17) participants received training and engaged in Maize

production and marketing, 117 (F-19, M-98) participants received training and engaged in potato production and marketing. 154 (F-46, M-108) received training and engaged in medicinal plant (Bashok, alovera, kalomegh) production and average additional monthly income increased 400 Taka.

- 250 participants found employment around the assemble markets or had employment in the assemble markets.
- 457 small holder producers engaged in high economic value crops production, which were as below:
 - 285 (F-171, M-114) participants received training and engaged in pumpkin production and earned average Tk. 4500-5000.
 - 57 (F-27, M-30) farmers received training and engaged in strawberry production and earned average 3000-4000 Taka.
 - 86 (F-24, M- 62) participants received training and engaged in ash gourds production and earned average 3500-4500 Taka.
 - 29 (F-14, M-15) participants received training and engaged in capsicum cultivation and earned average 2500-3000 Taka.
- 5 community markets were developed in the rural areas for selling and buying of community products to increase income and create employment opportunities. A total of 280 people have found employment in the markets of which 30 extreme poor women opened small shops. 5,512 people have taken advantage of greater access to markets for buying and selling. The plinths of 5 market places were elevated above flood level to help beneficiaries protect economic assets against flood water. The households surrounding these market areas found the place to save their assets from flood.
- Communities achievement discussed below:
 - 78 communities of 11 Unions are receiving extension services in rearing livestock and poultry from Livestock department at Upazila level. A total of 17 trained paravets are providing extension services.
 - 1713 CHD, 46 nursery workers, 154 field cultivators and 457 HEV cultivators have been linked with different service providers and extension services in crop cultivation around the community.
 - Communities had easy access to information on agricultural input technologies through established 'Agricultural Information Centers' at assemble Market.
 - Win-win collaborations developed and MoU signed between 2 private sector/market actors. East-West Seed Company of them is a large scale seed production and marketing company.
 - 852 poor and extreme poor and landless men and women participated and increased income employment opportunities within the agricultural value chain. Participants engaged in different interventions: 92 persons in seed production and marketing, 62 in agro tools repair/ maintenance, 341 in agro-tools operation, 18 in shallow tube well engines, 384 in BDS (business development services - collective IGA) and 17 in paravet services.

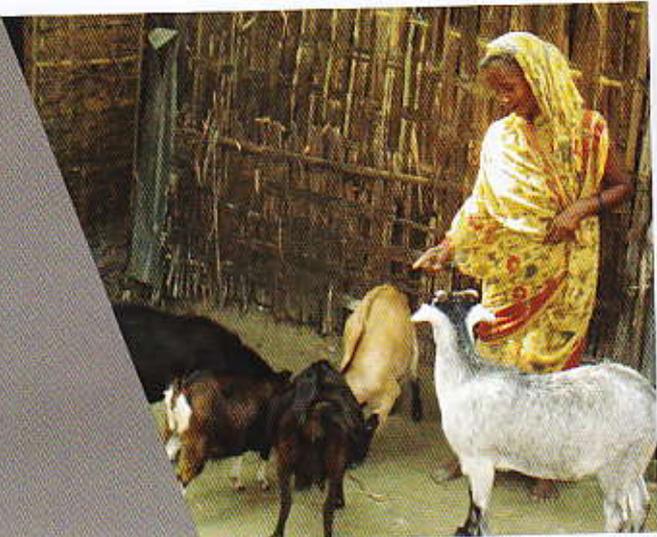
- 6482 poor and extreme poor men and women were engaged in different income opportunities through social transfer (human and productive assets). Details:
 - 114 women engaged in producing and marketing organic fertilizer and profit earned around 1500 to 2000 Taka a month.
 - 69 women engaged as rural sellers and earned a monthly profit of 2000 to 3000 Taka.
 - 1713 women engaged in CHD activities (1713 vegetable, fruit production and 231 poultry, 1023 goats & 459 cattle's rearing) which contributed in family member's nutrition consumption (vegetable, eggs, milk) as well as income generation. Additional income used for food, child education, health care, assets and savings. By selling CHD product average monthly income was Taka 900-1100 by selling vegetable, egg/milk/goat. Poultry population has increased to 23,100, goat 5,115 and cattle 509.
 - 69 extreme poor men and women engaged in business as Rural Collectors and earned monthly profit average Taka 2000-2500 (monitoring data) through buying products from rural households and selling at nearby markets.
 - 4,586 extremely poor people got an average wage of Taka 7,879 through CFW working an average 55-60 days. Additional income was used for food, shop and van purchase.

- 24 km of market link roads were repaired and restored, which helped community people to travel to the assemble market for selling and buying product.
- 1,290 households' plinths raised above flood level out of 1140 HHs, which enabled the beneficiaries to live safely, cultivate vegetables and rear poultry and livestock properly which contributed in family consumption and income generation.
- 139 Natural Leader received training and are playing active role in the targeted communities for community collectives for their economic well being. NL were engaged in organizing events (meeting, workshop, day observation, mass gathering, input distribution) and productive income opportunities, strengthening assemble market and community mobilization and gathering for linking to Up and other service provider.
- VDC, PUC and EKATA group's member developed effective linkage and collaboration with development actors and service providers for accessing services. 1 VDC secretary, 1 Market Monument Committee member and 1 female Rural seller participants were elected as UP member and influenced market and government bodies.
- 8% poor and vulnerable participants were engaged in social safety net activities. Some extreme participants received money Taka 10,000 each for starting business. Besides, they received support on agricultural and livestock extension services, health information, and information against human trafficking and resolve violence against women.

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Programmed Initiative for Monga Eradication (PRIME)



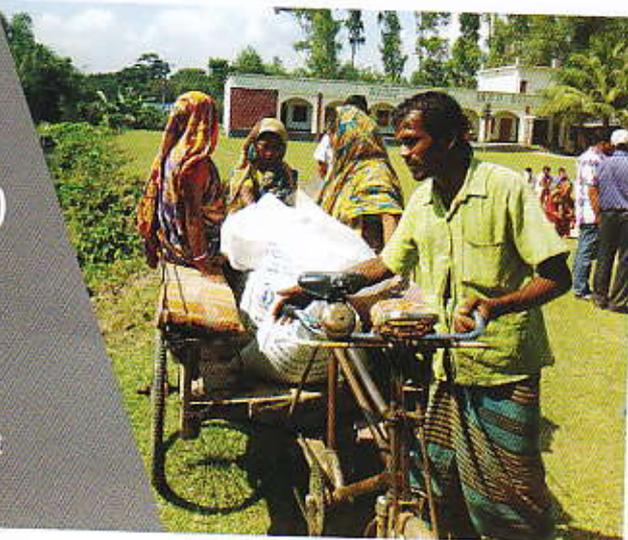
'PRIME' is a specialized project designed and implemented to address the unique critical issue of Monga in the north-western districts of Bangladesh. The project is being implemented in 43 unions, 8 upazilas under Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur and Nilphamari districts with a target of 56,054 households. In 2010-2011, the project provided skill development training to a total of 13,350 participants on different trades and then provided credit on easy terms and conditions.

Project highlights

- 10 schools are established and teachers-selection and resource mobilization completed (90% teachers were recruited from the Adivasi community).
- 250 children were enrolled from the Adivasi/Dalit communities.
- 10 school management committees were formed.
- Educational materials were disseminated two times.
- 20 BCC sessions were conducted with the students.
- 129 students were mainstreamed to formal primary schools.
- Santal Revolution day and World Indigenous People's Days were duly observed.
- Final evaluation tests for 250 students were conducted.

Provision of Development Support Services to Women under the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) Programme

Development partner: Department of Women Affairs (DWA)-Government of Bangladesh
Project area: Akkelpur and Kherlal upazila of Joypurhat district
Project period: February 2012 to December 2012



In Bangladesh, over half of the population live below the poverty line (defined as the inability to consume a minimum of 2100 Kcal per person per day). Out of these, 30 million ultra poor people live below the absolute poverty line and eat less than 1800 kcal per day. The burden of poverty falls disproportionately on women, adolescent and children among whom chronic malnutrition nutrient deficiencies prevail. Chronic food insecurity and poverty compounded by natural disaster reduces the chances of children and adolescents from ultra poor households to develop to their full potential. Considering the need of the poor people, Government of Bangladesh has started the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) Programme targeting ultra poor households. Through this project, ultra poor participants receive monthly food ration as well as life skills, income generation skills training. ESDO has been implementing the VGD programme in 19 unions of 2 upazilas of Joypurhat district.

Objectives

The main objectives are to build the income-earning capacities of VGD women and to socially empower them through training on awareness raising, provision of training on variety of Income Generating Activities (IGA), provision of credit and other support services during and beyond the food assistance period. VGD women shall graduate into the core development program of NGO after completion of the VGD cycle.

Project highlights

- 2945 beneficiaries were selected.
- 118 VGD groups were formed, with each group consisting of 25-30 VGD women.
- Food rations were distributed among selected beneficiaries.
- Bank accounts were opened for respective beneficiaries for generating savings.
- 2945 beneficiaries received life-skills training.

Aroni Handicrafts



With a view to provide employment to the Monga-stricken people, ESDO has established a unique handicrafts programme named 'Aroni'. Every year the extreme poor households in northwest Bangladesh face a very critical time from mid September to mid November. During this period, poor people hardly find any work in their locality. This seriously jeopardizes their food security and during this period, known widely as Monga, causes great misery to the common people. In order to address the misfortunes caused by Monga and to create employment opportunities, ARONI has evolved as a successful enterprise since 2005. It has brought about a considerable change in the livelihood of the marginalized communities through creating access to income generating activities for the women throughout the year.

ARONI is a bangla term, which means glittering stone by means of which fire is created. The fire is the symbol of light and hope. ARONI has already achieved considerable success in reducing Monga through implementation of rural handlooms and handicrafts projects. ARONI has got its own skilled designers, trainers and quality control sales to support these groups in enhancing their occupational capacity and maintaining the quality of their products. Women are making rural handicrafts such as Nakshi Kantha, bags, decorated bed sheets, cushion cover, mats etc. and ensuring proper market linkage within the country and abroad.





ESDO Training & Resource Center (ETRC)



Training and capacity building are extremely important for the success of any intervention. Sensing that, a trained and skilled manpower is indispensable for the success of the organization as well its program activities, ESDO has established four training centers for capacity building of the ESDO team. The first training centre was established in 1991 at College Para of Thakurgaon. After a few years, ESDO set up three other training centers at Lalmonirhat Sadar, Rangpur and Hatibandha.



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শন (ইএসটি)



Pre-school Program for Younger Siblings of Adivasi/Dalit Community of Thakurgaon District

Project duration: March 2010 – February 2011.

Project location: Pirganj, Ranishankoil, Haripur and Thakurgaon Sadar upazillas of Thakurgaon district.

Project partner: The Second Primary Education Department Program (PEDP-II), GoB.



A substantial number of Adivasi/Dalit people live in various parts of Thakurgaon district. Because of their ethnic identity, these people have long been subjected to various kinds of discriminations and are kept away from the mainstream society. They have little opportunities to access basic facilities and services provided by various GOs and NGOs. One of the main constraints of the socio-economic development of the Adivasi/Dalit communities has been their lack of access to educational facilities. Many people from other communities are reluctant to let Adivasi/Dalit children sit side-by-side with their children in the schools. As a result, many Adivasi/Dalit children drop out regularly from schools. On the other side, Adivasi/Dalit people also are not very enthusiastic about admit their children in mainstream schools because their children cannot understand Bengali well and find difficulty to mingle with non-Adivasi children. In consideration of this difficult situation of the Adivasi/Dalit people, especially their children, ESDO has been implementing the 'Pre-school Program for Younger Siblings of Adivasi/Dalit Community' project to provide educational scopes and opportunities to the children of Advasi/Dalit community so that they receive education without facing any difficulty or discrimination. Ten schools have been established under this project where Adivasi/Dalit children are receiving education not only in Bengali, but also in their own language. In this way, this project has created an opportunity for integrating the Adivasi/Dalit children in the mainstream educational system as well as enhancing the possibility of their unhindered socio-economic development.



Immediate Objective

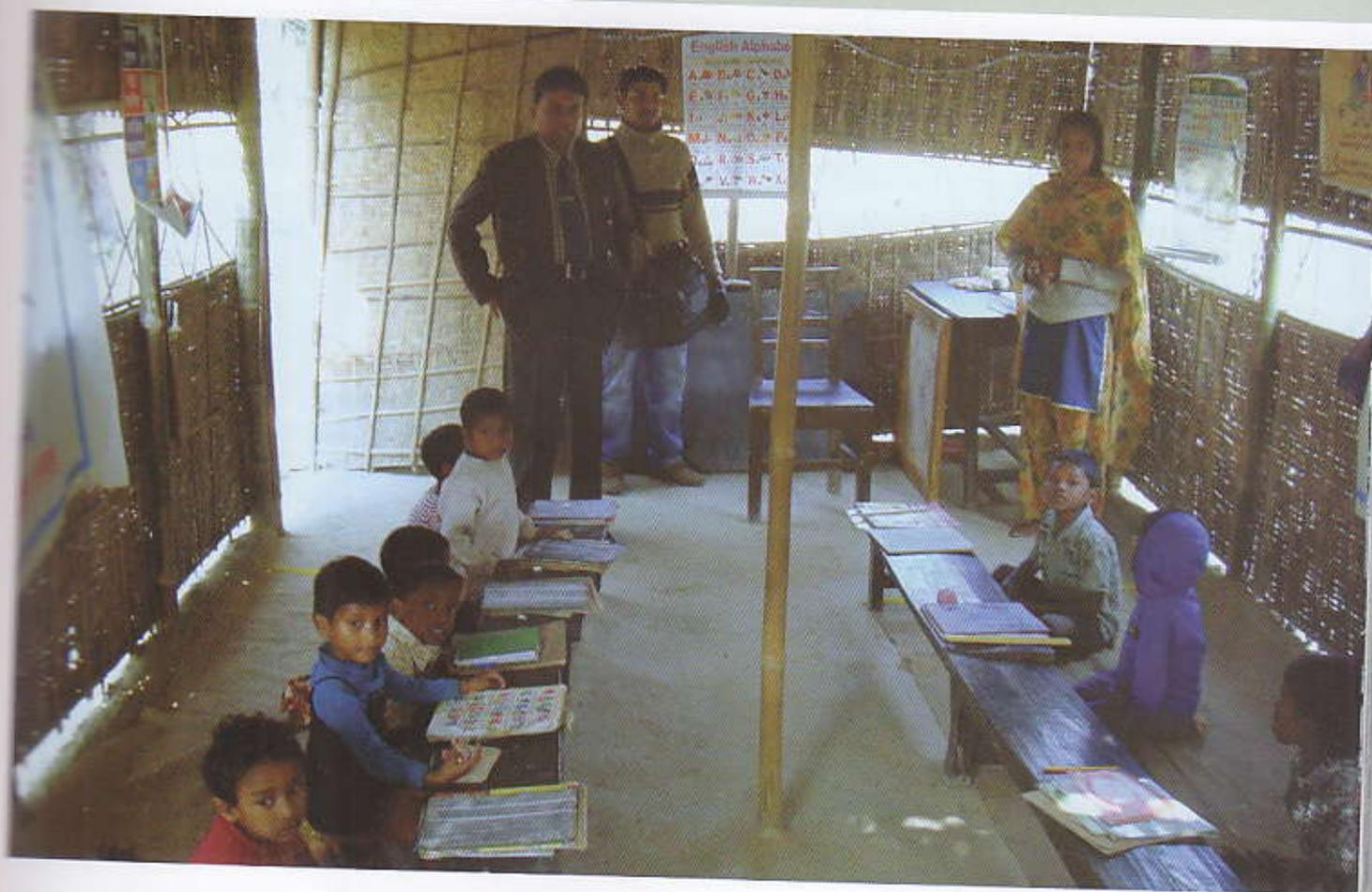
- Increase enrollment of Adivasi/Dalit children in formal school.

Specific Objectives

- To develop a sustainable rights-based approach to ensure education rights of the **Adivasi/Dalit Children**.
- To build up capacity of 250 Adivasi/Dalit Children to enroll themselves into formal primary school.

Project highlights

- 10 schools are established and teachers-selection and resource mobilization completed (90% teachers were recruited from the Adivasi community).
- 250 children were enrolled from the Adivasi/Dalit communities.
- 10 school management committees were formed.
- Educational materials were disseminated two times.
- 20 BCC sessions were conducted with the students.
- 129 students were mainstreamed to formal primary schools.
- Santal Revolution day and World Indigenous People's Days were duly observed.
- Final evaluation tests for 250 students were conducted.



Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh

Project duration: September 2010 to August 2012.

Project areas: 88 unions of 13 upazilas under Rangpur, Nilphamari and Lalmonirhat districts.

Donor: Government of Bangladesh (GoB), European Union (EU) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).



Rangpur, Nilphamari and Lalmonirhat districts are located in the North-western part of Bangladesh. As compared to other areas of the country, the level of poverty and illiteracy in these areas is quite high. Therefore, the concentration of poor and ultra poor people in these regions is also particularly high. Consequently, these people are easily manipulated by various vested interest groups and unscrupulous people and are subjected to oppression, discrimination and injustice on a regular basis. They have little or no idea about existing laws and the ways and means of receiving justice from the state and the society. They are easily manipulated by the miscreants and many poor and marginalized people fail to receive justice at any level. Because of ignorance, the underprivileged people of Bangladesh are frequently deprived of justice and fail to receive legal assistance. Because of ignorance, majority of them try to solve their legal problems from a court of law instead of trying to solve it through negotiation at the local level. Since the country's judiciary has huge loads of pending cases, these small matters remain unsolved and hanged for a long time, causing harassment, mental distress and financial loss of all concerned. In view of this, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), European Union (EU) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have been implementing a project entitled 'Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh'. Awareness raising and capacity building is one of the major activities of the project. Eco Social Development Organization (ESDO) has been selected as an implementing partner of this project.



The project aims at strengthening local justice system in 500 union parishads through village courts intends to improve access to justice for disadvantaged and marginalized groups and enhance human rights systems and process in Bangladesh.

Specific objectives

- To empower women, the poor and disadvantaged groups to seek remedies for injustices and to enable justice institutions to be responsive to claims.
- To improve and protect human rights security through a human right based approach to development and delivery.
- To empower citizens to resolve their disputes at the local level in an expeditious, transparent and affordable manner.
- To strengthen local government institutions to be responsive to local need and offer appropriate legal service through well functioning village courts.

Project highlights

- Communities' knowledge and understanding on laws and Village Court (VC) were developed through 5438 courtyard meetings and 4224 CBO meetings.
- Capacity development of the UP elected reps, Imams, local justice and CBO members were undertaken.
- 30 issue-based skill development training for women and disadvantaged people were conducted.
- Capacity building of 880 Village Police were conducted.
- Incentives were provided to 847 village police, Choukidars and Dafadars.



Abdul Majid and Narayan find peace through the village court

Narayan Chandra Roy hails from Palashbari Union under the district of Nilphamari. Son of a small farmer, Narayan is dependent on his meager income from agricultural works and a small grocers' shop. His neighbors Abdul Mazid, Faizur Rahman, Matiur Rahman and Mizanur Rahman are also small farmers like Narayan. Their agricultural lands were adjacent to one another. One day, a dispute arose between Narayan and his neighbors concerning the accidental damage to the borders between their lands. A scuffle took place among them. A few days later, Narayan's father was beaten by Abdul Mazid and his friends. Narayan complained about the incident to an Ex-UP Chairman named Mr. Momtaj Ali, but to no advantage. Some more days passed in that way, but no solution to the problem could be found. Then a villager advised Narayan to take the matter to the court. Accordingly, Narayan filed a case against Mazid and his accomplices at first at the upazila level and then at the district level at the District Magistrate Court. Both the parties involved received orders from the district court for appearing before the court. Since they had no idea what that order meant, they consulted a local community leader, but he also could not give them any constructive digestion. Two years had passed by that time and both parties almost forgot the whole matter. Then, one day, police arrested Abdul Mazid from the village market and sent him to jail on the charge of failing to appear before the court. In the days following the arrest of Mazid, both parties spent large amount of money for the purpose of the case and at one point, they became completely hopeless. However, in the course of the case, both parties had a lot of discussions and gradually, developed a fellow-feeling with one another.

Then, after a lengthy legal procedure spanning five years, the magistrate court sent the case to the Village Court. Both parties received summons from the UP Chairman for appearing before the village court. Both Narayan and Mazid had some prior idea about the village court because they attended a courtyard meetings organized by ESDO on village court. Since the UP Chairman gave witness at higher court in the same case, as per his advice, Mazid submitted a petition to the Upazilla Nirbahi Officer (UNO) to change the Chairman of the village court. The UNO appointed Suhsmita Rani, a woman Ward Commissioner as the new Chairman of the village court. After thorough and detailed hearing, the jury board gave their judgment in favour of the plaintiff. However, since both parties have suffered considerable financial loss and mental distress in the course of the long legal battle, the court ordered the defendants to pay 500 Taka to Narayan Chandra as compensation. Both the defendant and the plaintiff were satisfied with this judgment and they fully agreed with the court order.

Narayan said, 'I lost approximately 60,000 Taka in the course of the lengthy legal battle and underwent great mental and physical distresses. This verdict has given me a way out from that imbroglio and now I can get back to my normal life. I appreciate the judgment of the village court and urge everybody to come to this court for solving their disputes.' The contestant Abdul Mazid said, 'The village court has saved me from further suffering and financial losses. I have taken my lessons from this occurrence and from now on, I will keep happy relations with Narayan and his family. I am sure that, our case will encourage other villagers to resolve their disputes at the village court without going unnecessarily to the higher courts.'

Fulti Begum receives justice as well as peace

Fulti Begum's husband passed away when her daughter was only five years old. Helpless, she started living with her mother along with her daughter. Fulti Begum's father had died many years ago. Since her mother had no steady sources of income, she had to struggle a lot to make both ends meet. Therefore, Fulti Begum was compelled to work as housemaid in order to support herself, her daughter and her mother. Life was indeed miserable. In the course of time, her daughter grew up and Fulti Begum had to make plans for the marriage of her daughter. She used up all her hard-earned money to give her daughter in marriage to a local boy. Then, all of a sudden, her mother fell ill with typhoid and lost her eyesight. Fulti Begum continued working as housemaid and had to toil excessively to support herself and mother. In spite of acute poverty, she managed to save 20,000 Taka. However, at the request of her cousin Ashraf, Fulti Begum lent the money to him. Faziruddin and Abdul Mannan, two relatives were present as witness. Ashraf promised that, he will give Fulti Begum 24 decimals of lands as mortgage for the money and also 11 maunds of rice per year. He stood by his promise only in the first year and then violated the promise. Helpless, Fulti Begum complained about the matter to the local elders.

Three meetings were arranged by the local elders to solve the issue but in spite of repeated promise of repaying his debt, Ashraf failed to keep his promises every time. Then at the suggestion of some local women, Fulti Begum files a civil case with the village court to resolve the dispute. Representatives from both sides presented their arguments at the village court. After thorough hearing, the court gave its judgment in favor of Fulti Begum and ordered the defendant Ashraf to pay Fulti Begum 20,000 Taka in four installments. Accordingly, Ashraf paid off the money in four installments. Ashraf also expressed his remorse for all his wrongdoings. In this way, Fulti Begum received justice and her financial and mental woes were removed.



Liakat Ali is grateful to the Village Court

Liakat Ali (55), a small sharecropper, lives in the village of Sullipur at Kuikuri Union in Pirgacha Upazila under the district of Rangpur. He earns much less from sharecropping than he needs for supporting his family and, as a result, lives from hands to mouth. Shahidul Islam is a businessman who deals in paddy. His shop is at the local Devi Chowdhurani Bazar where Liakat Ali frequently goes to sell off his paddy. Gradually, a good relationship grew between the two persons. Shahidul has been purchasing paddy from Liakat since long. On 29 August 2010, Shahidul bought 21 maunds of paddy from Liakat Ali at 17,340 Taka in the presence of some local people named Alauddin, Mannan and Shah Alam. At the time of purchase, Shahidul gave Liakat Ali 10,000 Taka and promised to pay the remaining amount next day. The next day, Shahidul came to Liakat Ali's home and loaned 2060 Taka from Liakat instead of giving the money that he owed to Liakat. He said that, he will give back Liakat all the money he owed on 20 September of the same year. However, in spite of repeated request of Liakat, Shahidul failed to repay the money.

Unable to collect the money from Shahidul, at first Liakat raised the issue with the local elites and failing to find any solution, files a case against Shahidul with the village court. The court followed necessary procedures and arranged a hearing between the two parties. After long sessions of hearing, the village court unanimously declared Shahidul Islam as guilty and ordered him to pay Liakat an amount of 9400 Taka in two installments by 15 March 2011. Liakat Ali expressed his satisfaction at the order and informed that, he had come to know about the village court from a courtyard meeting organized by ESDO at a local woman's house. He said, 'If I had not attended that meeting, I would not have taken the matter to the village court and received justice.' Shahidul felt ashamed for his misconduct and hoped that, after he repays Liakat's money, the relationship between himself and Liakat would improve.





ESDO Adolescent boys and girls club

Project duration: January 2012 – June 2014

Project location: 19 unions in Thakurgaon Sadar and 10 unions in Pirganj upazila under Thakurgaon district.

Donor agency: Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs, Government of Bangladesh



According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there are 28 million adolescent in Bangladesh who comprise 22% of the country's population. Approximately 13.8 million of them are girls. Historically, the girl children have been subjected to different kinds of discrimination. As a result, they lag far behind the boys in terms of health, education, nutrition and other socio-economic indicators. This systematic discrimination and abuse have placed the girl children in a precarious position. This has cast a shadow of uncertainty over the future of the adolescent girls and their contribution in the country's socio-economic development has been put under a question mark. In view of this, the project has been undertaking to create critical consciousness among the adolescent boys and girls about social equity and a gender-sensitive positive mindset. This project is expected to empower the girl children to take part in the mainstream development process and bring about sustainable social development.

Goals

To develop the adolescent boys and girls as active agents in the favourable environments of the family and the society for creating a society based on gender-equity.

Objectives

To create a conducive environment in the society for improving quality of life, enforcement of rights and a mutually protective society free from gender discriminations by strengthening life skills of the adolescent boys and girls.

Project highlights

- Five child-marriages have been prevented in the project areas.
- 29 adolescent boys and girls clubs have been set up.
- 29 local assistance committees have been formed.
- 29 information sharing meetings about the commencement of clubs have been organized.
- 51 meetings of local assistance committees held.