

## Project in Brief

**Name of the Project:** (Sunamganj) Community Based Resource Management Project

**Sponsoring Ministry/Division:** Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperative/Local Government Division

**Development Partner (Donor):** IFAD

**Implementing Agency:** Local Government Engineering Department

**Project Period:** Around 12 Years (January 2003-June 2014)

**Project Area:** All 11 Upazilas of Sunamganj District (lies in northeastern part of Bangladesh)

**Target People:** 135,000 household holding land below 2.5 acre

**Funding:** Total revised cost USD 29.27 million (IFAD loan USD 24.94 million, BDG USD 3.69 million and people's contribution USD 0.64 million in kind and labour)

### Objectives of the project

The main objectives of the project are to:

- increase the assets and income of 135,000 households by developing self-managing grass-roots organizations and ensuring increased access to primary resources, employment, and credit; and
- support the development of national institutions to replicate the project approach in other areas of Bangladesh.

### Project approach

The project approach is demand driven. The people are at center. All development activities are taken consulting with the people and considering the sustainability. Gender and environmental issues are crosscutting to all development initiatives of the project.

### Project implementation arrangement

The project is governed by three committees one at secretariat level called Project Steering Committee headed by the Secretary of Local Government Division; second one is at district level called the District Coordination Committee

headed by the Deputy Commissioner and another one is at each Upazila level called Upazila Coordination Committee headed by Upazil Nirbahi Officer (UNO). All committees comprise members from concern ministries, divisions, departments and development agencies.

Apart from that, for implementing day to day activities and administrative works, there is a Project Management Unit (PMU). The PMU is headed by Project Director and under his administration all project activities are implemented.

Besides, there are some inter-ministerial and District Committee to deal the activities of transferring water-bodies from Ministry of Land.

### The components of the project

There are five components of the project to meet the project objectives: These are:

- Community organization and micro-credit;
- Labour-intensive infrastructure development;
- Fisheries development;
- Agriculture and livestock production; and
- Institutional support.

### Community organization and micro-credit:

The main objective of this component is to form community organization (CO) of targeted people upon the concept of building Self-help Group. Each CO comprises 20 to 30 members. Men and women COs are formed separately. The members save money in CO and receive credit from their savings fund as well as from project credit line through Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB). The group members undergo different kinds of trainings for capacity development in group & financial management, and acquiring skill for alternative livelihoods. The following activities are being undertaken by this component:

- Forming self-help savings group
- Ensuring credit by group savings and project credit line
- Providing training for developing group skill in financial management and good governance
- Providing training in promoting alternative livelihoods

### Major Achievement

- 86,737 households have been brought under 2,995 COs and of which 2,145 are female with membership of 61543 and they have gone through training in social awareness, gender development and good governance.
- CO members mobilized savings amounting to Tk 120.9 million
- 60,000 households have received loan ranging from Tk 4000 to Tk. 14,000 from savings and project credit line and invested in income generating activities of which more than 70% are women.

### Major Learning

- Group based development approach found very effective and efficient in promoting rural development activities
- Women are good in building small capital and investing that for family well-being
- Women's financial empowerment has viable social impact on improvement in education, health and so on.

### **Labor intensive infrastructure development:**

The objectives of the component are to develop infrastructure in project area and create employment for the poor involving them in infrastructural activities. The unique part of this component is extensive participation of the community at all levels of activities including selecting scheme, participating in construction work, monitoring the work, ensuring the maintenance and so on. The following activities are being implemented under this component:

- Installing tube-well for safe drinking water;
- Constructing village road and village protection structure for connect villages with mainstream road network and protecting villages from wave action;
- Constructing Multipurpose Village Centre (MVC) using for flood shelter, training, meeting, social gathering and other activities required for socio-economic

development of the community;

- Installing water sealed ring latrine to promote hygienic environment for the community; and
- Employing rural poor in infrastructural construction and maintenance for increased income.

### Major Achievement

- 315 Km of rural road have been built and directly connected 900 villages with mainstream road network
- Around 300,000 numbers of households have got direct access to better communication and thereby increased their access to market, school, hospital and other civic facilities.
- 8 numbers of village protection walls have been built to protect around 2,000 number of households live isolated in deep haor areas
- Around 350,000 numbers of poor have been employed by infrastructural activities of which 70% are women.
- Around 90,000 numbers of households have got access to safe drinking water.
- Around 70,000 numbers of households have got access to better sanitation facilities.

### Major Learning

- Concrete block based road and village protection wall is cost effective, environmental friendly, labour intensive and easy for maintenance
- Local community based LCS approach in building rural road is sustainable, give ownership to the community and financially beneficial for them.

**Fisheries development:** This component is being implemented to ensure access of the poor fisher community to water-bodies. The component is applying participatory community based fisheries management (CBFM) for sustainable resource use. The following activities are being undertaken by this component:

- Identifying and demarking resource bases by mapping, surveying and installing pillars;

- Excavating/re-excavating water-bodies and khal (canal) to restore fish habitat;
- Transferring water-bodies to the communities for long-term use;
- Establishing fish sanctuaries to regain diversity and increase production of fish;
- Giving training to Bell User Group (BUG) members in group and fisheries management
- Providing training to women for raising swamp tree for restoring swap forestry in haor area;
- Promoting pond fish culture for raising income of indigent women;
- Extending assistance to local administration and department of fisheries for enforcing Fish Conservation Acts; and
- Monitoring fish production, consumption, marketing and assessing its impact on people's livelihoods.

#### Major achievement

- 204 numbers of water-bodies have got accessed by fisher community
- 7115 numbers of households have got long-term accessed to water-bodies.
- 180 numbers of water-bodies have been developed through re-excavation and production increased from 659kg/ha, 2007 to 720 kg/ha, 2011; which is more than the national rate of beel production (615kg/ha, 2011)
- 50 numbers of beels have been brought under improved connectivity through canal re-excavation and road collection
- Through community based responsive fisheries practice biodiversity of beel has been improved and numbers of fish species have increased from 80 to 105 during 2009-2011 where 12 were endangered species.
- Fisher could raise their income from beel fisheries average Tk. 6,500 /year where at older beel it has reached Tk 20,000/ member/year.

#### Major Learning

- The scope of use of beel by genuine fisher and their organized management can establish responsive fisheries with sustained results in terms of increased

- production and improved fish biodiversity
- For effective fisher organization good governance should be in place to ensure leadership rotation and transparency and accountability in financial management
- Women can productively involve in beel fisheries through plantation and sorting fish
- An institutional framework other than cooperative should be in place for building sustained fisher organization

**Agriculture and livestock production:** The activities under this component are being implemented to promote crop and livestock production to enhance the income and scope of food security for the project beneficiaries. The following activities are being implemented under this component:

- Undertaking Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) to assess the needs of the farmers and identify constraints prior to implement any activities;
- Initiating participatory research in cooperation with national research institutions to promote improved varieties and technologies for farmers;
- Arranging workshops, training, demonstration and field-days to disseminate results of research to farmers; and
- Working in partnership with local line departments for arranging training and developing appropriate extension materials for farmers.

#### Major Achievement

- 14 numbers of new major crop varieties have been introduced and adopted by 68,720 numbers of farmers with improved farming practice and increased production
- Developed 1378 numbers of advance farmer for 'farmer to farmer' extension and 114 numbers of vaccinators to providing door-step livestock health care services
- Through Bull and AI service 713 improved calves have been produced
- Under mass vaccination and de-worming program respectively 26,3307 and

80,854 animals have got services

#### Major Learning

- Participatory research trail is found to be an effective tool to introduce improved variety of crops for framers sustainably
- Homestead based integrated farming has huge potential to meet the food needs, nutrition and increase income of poor family
- Regular mass vaccination and de-worming have viable impact on improvement of livestock in haor area

**Institutional Development:** This component is for developing capacity and facilities of the project management, partner agencies and grassroots organizations.

#### Major Achievement

- More than 10 (national and international, government and non-government) organizations have been working in a harmony and increased capacity to achieve project objectives
- Staff engaged in project acquired diverse skill and techniques to work for the development of haor and its people
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#### Major Learning

- With clear understanding of responsibilities and regular sharing partnership can play effective roles in development with harmony
- Partnership reinforces accountability

#### Concluding remarks

The overall project's achievement is significant. The targeted community households have considerably been benefited by project's inputs, and many positive changes have come in their livelihoods those have resulted in better living. Through institutional support project could develop a set of skill staff and partners institutions for working in haor areas. The major achievement of the project is successfully disseminating the project results and able to replicate the project to other haor districts investing USD 118 million.

However, few treats as well project foresees in sustainability of project achievement. To mention the foremost, These are: the lack of proper institutional backup to fisher group other than so called cooperative system; and Secondly, considering the ecological and connectivity aspects beel development should be integrated to a system of larger haor watershed development and scope of that is yet in place as such.

