

## Project No. 1

### DEVELOPMENT EXTENSION EDUCATION SERVICES (DEEDS)

#### Principle:

Self-reliance of grassroots people through empowerment and institution building.

#### Objectives:

The major objectives of the project are given below:

- To make clear about the roles and functions of People's Organizations (POs) for the Primary Groups (PGs), Union Committees (UCs) and *Thana* Committees (TCs);
- To make the UCs and TCs self-managed and self-financed; and
- To mobilize and avail local resources and to undertake issue based advocacy campaign by networking at local level.

#### Background:

The project started in 1979 and went through seven phases so far. The current three-year phase (phase-VIII) of the project commenced in July 2007 and will end in June 2010. The reporting period is the second year of DEEDS Phase (VIII).

**Staff Strength:** Total - 322 (male-192, female-130).

#### Donors:

Misereor, Germany and CORDAID, The Netherlands.

**Expenditure:**

Foreign partners' Contribution:	: Tk.	54,969,785
Local Contribution	: Tk.	90,041,262
Total	:Tk..	145,011 047

#### Achievements:

##### A. Primary Groups and Members:

During the reporting period information about groups and members of DEEDS are as follows:

Particulars	As on June 2008	Performance of July'08- June'09		
		Formed/ Admitted	Dropped/ Dismantled	Cumulative as on June 2009
<b>Primary Groups:</b>	13,570	399	193	13,776
Male	3932	19	125	3826
Female	9638	380	68	9950
<b>PG members:</b>	2,60,630	29,545	24,620	2,65,555
Male	71,520	4227	6884	68,863
Female	189,110	25,318	17,736	196,692

The Table above shows during the reporting period 399 (Female-380) Primary Groups (PGs) were formed. On the other hand, 193 PGs (Female-68) were dismantled. As a result there was an increase of 206 PGs. In total 29,545 members (Female-25,318) joined with the PGs and 24,620 (Female-17,736) members left the PGs/graduated during the year. As a result total 4,925 members increased compared to the previous reporting period. Upto June 2009 the number of total PGs stood at 13,776 with 265,555 members. The figure given in the Table indicates that male groups and members were decreased, because they frequently went out for work and could not give time to attend meetings. They also had a tendency to pay loan installments irregularly.

## B. Training (group members/leaders/staff):

To capacitate the leaders of PGs, UCs and TCs on their organizational and social responsibilities, the following training courses were arranged throughout the year. Caritas Development Institute (CDI), DEEDS Regional and Field level staff facilitated the training courses.

	Activities	Cumulative on June 2008	Target	Achievement	% Of Achievement	Cumulative on June 2009
1	Advocacy, Lobby and Networking training for leaders	13515	469	392	84	13907
2	Gender & Development Training for PG members (Couple) & Leaders	9148	0	0	0	9148
3	Human rights, Peace & Justice Training for Leaders & PG members	3085	464	427	92	3512
4	Higher Training on POs role and function for Leaders	3793	536	480	90	4273
5	Training for Cultural Team	2025	214	183	86	2208
6	Training on economic, social and cultural rights	2245	150	156	104	2401
7	Training for POs role & function for Organizers(SD)	1484	13	10	77	1494
8	RBM training for Field Officers (SD)	57	2	2	100	59

After participating in the above training courses, visible positive changes were shown in the participants' attitudinal and functional activities. The leaders of the POs at union and *upazila* levels are able to organize and lead advocacy campaign and social mobilization on local unjust and right based issues from which they were deprived. They were also capable of mobilizing resources from the local government and other development (non-govt.) agencies. Leaders of the Mediation Committee could mitigate the conflict at their own community. Consequently, a total of 66 Union level POs gained the capacity to look after the organizational and social responsibilities through People's Organizations by their own initiatives. Besides, training courses were organized for the staff to increase their skills on supervision of POs activities.

## C. Activities of People's Organizations (POs) :

POs undertook the following activities during the reporting period:

Sl	Activities	Cumulative on June 2008	Target	Achieve.	% Of Achievement	Cumulative on June 2009
1	Organizational Meeting (Group level)	13,27,154	159813	115719	72	1442873
2	Cluster Meeting (Involving community people)	33,603	11990	8667	72	42270
3	Union Committee Meeting	29,323	4530	4245	94	33568
4	<i>Upazila</i> Committee Meeting	2,039	290	256	88	2295
5	No. of self-managed Pos	66	70	68	97	134
6	Six monthly Coordination meeting of POs	58	14	12	86	70
7	Six monthly Development allies meeting	2520	-	141	-	2661

SI	Activities	Cumulative on June 2008	Target	Achieve.	% Of Achievement	Cumulative on June 2009
8	Day Observation	4606	-	852	-	5458
9	No. of Cultural event perform	2322	23518	18111	77	20433
10	Established community based library	178	-	226	-	404
11	Advocacy Campaign	167	275	181	66	348
12	Social Mobilization	98	454	373	82	471

The Table above portrays the major accomplishments of POs, where members' participation made the course of actions effective. The leaders could raise their voice and bargain regarding poor and needy people's access to government resources, which allowed them to lead a better life. Meanwhile, the PO leaders organized 181 advocacy campaign and 373 social mobilization programs along with other like-minded organizations by keeping good linkage with them. They planned and directed all the programs based on local issues like campaign for allocation of *khas* (govt. owned) land to the landless *Advasi*, demand for construction of brick road and bridge, campaign for legal action to rapist and demand for rural electrification. They campaigned to build up awareness about the bad effect of dowry and early marriage, adulterated food, HIV-AIDS, unhygienic sanitation, environment pollution, child and women trafficking, child labour, marriage without registration. They demanded of the authority to set up a health care center at union level for expanding medical service towards local people. To ensure and establish the good practices in the surroundings by the common people POs formed Social Audit Team inclusion of non-group members and local allies. A total of 2920 Social Audit Team worked on 4274 issues in this period. The members of the Team celebrated different national and international days significantly to disseminate its inner values to the community people and demonstrated cultural performances as it is one of the effective way to influence people's minds.

### Results:

The current Phase VIII of the project gives emphasis on from 'doing' to 'achieving' role of People's Organizations (POs). Here the outcomes are mentioned below:

- As an outcome of awareness on socio-economic and cultural rights, the POs leaders as well as the group members can argue and bargain with the local administration for access to the available government scheme and resources.
- Women leadership as well as their mobility in the society has significantly increased. Women can raise their voice against any injustice and illegal act. The presence and active participation of women in any social gathering have remarkably increased compared to the previous situation.
- It has been observed that at family level, relationship between wife and husband has improved.
- POs maintain good relations and linkage with the like-minded organizations, NGOs, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and civil society members. Now government personnel and local administration recognize the voice of POs leader and extend possible cooperation towards their activities.
- The families belonging to POs are engaged in running different kinds of Income Generating Activities and adding additional income to meet daily expenses.
- POs have established Welfare Fund and Development Fund through their own contribution.
- A level of awareness has been found among the grassroots members. Planting trees during rainy season has increased remarkably with the initiative of government as well as NGOs.
- Use of organic fertilizers and local variety of seeds and extermination of harmful insects using indigenous knowledge and local technologies in the agricultural field by the farmers have become a common practice.

## Conclusion:

Over the last 30 years successful operation of DEEDS, 382 Union level POs have been established of which a total of 132 POs have been taken over the responsibility of their Organizational, Social and Educational activities to be operated by their own management. This indicates that the capacity of grassroots people and their leaders have significantly improved to generate people-centered right-based initiatives for the common interest of mass people. In other words, we can say that POs are self-governed and gradually moving towards self-sustainability. Still, POs need further facilitation and resources both from the government as well as from the development partners to uphold their capacity, address to the present demand of the members and to cope with the continuous changing global scenario. On the way to move forward, without any facilitation, support or guidance in terms of technical or financial these organized grassroots self-help groups federated as People's Organisation may face the challenge to get institutional sustainability.

## Protection of Cultivable Land from Saline Water

Salinity increase in fresh water is the main problem of the Coastal Region of Bangladesh (southern part of the country). Gradually the cultivation of crops is facing obstruction because of flowing of brackish water into the agricultural lands. Natural growth of plants and vegetation hampered. There is acute want of safe water for washing, cooking and drinking. Land is losing fertility and sweet water fish are decreasing. Even local varieties of fish, which are supposed to be found in the canal and marshy land in plenty, are seen seldom now. Saline water began to enter slowly into the area of Dumuria *upazila* some years ago. Some selfish persons tactfully penetrated saline water into a vast area to fulfill their personal gain. Now-a-days shrimp culture is a profitable sector for investment and there is a high demand for it in the foreign market. So some businessmen from outside areas are engaged in this act with the support of local moneylenders and influential persons having connection with the power structure. These people are very organized and they do not bother to deprive other people of their legitimate shares. They are penetrating saline water for shrimp culture and at the same time they are destroying fresh water fishes and other species. They are grabbing poor people's agricultural land too. The small farmers cannot protest against them. Salinity in the fields has hampered paddy cultivation and they are gradually becoming unemployed.



The Chairperson of *Upazila* Executive Committee delivers her talk on protection of agricultural land from saline water

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A female actor performs in the Popular Theater against penetration of saline water

Monoranjan Golder, Chairman of Gutudia Union Committee at first realized the matter. He took initiative to make people aware of the situation through personal contact at different levels in the locality. He also raised the issue in the coordination meeting with other organizations such as *Mahila Adhidaptar*, Proshika and Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB). Finally he brought this issue to the notice of the Dumuria *Upazila* Committee of the Peoples' Organization (POs) formed under Caritas DEEDS.

*Upazila* Committee looked into the issue, discussed the problem and decided to organize an advocacy campaign on this issue in 2008. According to the decision, a mass rally and signature campaign

involving 185 male and 228 female persons was launched to protect homestead and agricultural land from saline water. *Upazila Nirbahi Officer* (Chief Executive at Sub-district level) was also informed of the issue and he was convinced. An application seeking permission for organizing 'Human Chain' was submitted to the U.N.O of Dumuria and he allowed them to hold a rally.

A discussion meeting was held and a human chain with 250 persons (who gathered on both the sides of Khulna-Satkhira highway with colorful banners and different festoons) was formed beginning from 4:00 to 4:20 p.m at Kharnia Apex Office. After forming the human chain the leaders of the POs went to the *Upazila* Fishery Officer and submitted a memorandum to him. The Fishery Officer received it and assured them that he would take necessary action in consultation with the U.N.O regarding this matter.

Then they attended a meeting which was presided over by Mrs. Shefali Nandi, Chairperson of Dumuria POs. The local people including Ex-Chairman of Kharnia Union Committee expressed their previous experiences on the bad effect of saline water towards cultivation and fishing. They spoke about serious threat to paddy cultivation and other effects on bio-diversity. A (folk) song narrating the harmful effect of saline water was sung in course of the discussion. The artists from the local Cultural Team and group members of Apex organized a *Popular Theatre* on the issue of negative effects of saline water.

This advocacy campaign initiated by the POs inspired the local people to become united regarding this issue and to protest jointly against penetration of saline water. A report on salinity was published in the "Daily *Janmobhumi*", a local Bengali newspaper. The female member of the Khornia Union Parishad committed herself to protect the area from salinity at any cost. The Senior Fisheries Officer also agreed to take necessary steps to protect agricultural land from salinity. The POs are being continuing its advocacy programs to fulfill their demand. If needed, POs are ready to take strong initiative in collaboration with the group members, community people, elites and local NGOs to achieve their expected result.

People gossip at the tea stall and other mock stages that the POs have done the right thing. Now the common people are united to protest against the ill motive of a few coterie and to save their cultivable land from salinity. The POs is their platform where they would stand all together to establish their rights.